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Nick Carter Stories

AN UNCANNY REVENGE

OR

Nick Carter and the Mind-Murderer

NICK CARTER STORIES

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AN UNCANNY REVENGE;

Or, NICK CARTER AND THE MIND MURDERER.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A TRAGEDY OF THE STAGE.

The members of Nick Carter's household all happened to meet at the breakfast table that morning—a rather unusual circumstance.

The famous New York detective sat at the head of the table. Ranged about it were Chick Carter, his leading assistant; Patsy Garvan, and the latter's young wife, Adelina, and Ida Jones, Nick's beautiful woman assistant.

It was the latter who held the attention of her companions at that moment. She was a little late, and had just seated herself. Her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes gave no hint that she had reached the house—they all shared the detective's hospitable roof—a little after three o'clock that morning.

"You good people certainly missed a sensation last night," she declared. "It was the strangest thing—and one of the most pitiable I ever beheld!"

Nick, who had been glancing at his favorite newspaper, looked up.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

It was Ida's turn to show surprise.

"Is it possible you don't know, any of you?" she demanded, looking around the table. "Haven't you read of Helga Lund's breakdown, or whatever it was?"

Helga Lund, the great Swedish actress, who was electrifying New York that season in a powerful play, "The Daughters of Men," had consented, in response to many requests, to give a special midnight performance, in order that the many actors and actresses in the city might have an opportunity to see her in her most successful rôle at an hour which would not conflict with their own performances.

The date had been set for the night before, and, since it was not to be exclusively a performance for professionals, the manager of the theater, who was a friend of Nick Carter's, had presented the detective with a box.

Much to Nick's regret, however, and that of his male assistants, an emergency had prevented them from attending. To cap the climax, Adelina Garvan had not been feeling well, so decided not to go. Consequently, Ida Jones had occupied the box with several of her friends.

Nick shook his head in response to his pretty assistant's question.

"I haven't, anyway," he said, glancing from her face back to his paper. "Ah, here's something about it—a long article!" he added. "I hadn't seen it before. It looks very serious. Tell us all about it."

Ida needed no urging, for she was full of her subject.

"Oh, it was terrible!" she exclaimed, shuddering. "Helga Lund had been perfectly wonderful all through the first and second acts. I don't know when I have been so thrilled. But soon after the third act began she stopped right in the middle of an impassioned speech and stared fixedly into the audience, apparently at some one in one of the front rows of the orchestra.

"I'm afraid I can't describe her look. It seemed to express merely recollection and loathing at first, as if she had recognized a face which had very disagreeable associations. Then her expression—as I read it, at any rate—swiftly changed to one of frightened appeal, and then it jumped to one of pure harrowing terror.

"My heart stopped, and the whole theater was as still as a death chamber—at least, the audience was. Afterward I realized that the actor who was on the stage with her at the time had been improvising something in an effort to cover up her lapse; but I don't believe anybody paid any attention to him, any more than she did. Her chin dropped, her eyes were wild and seemed ready to burst from their sockets. She put both hands to her breast, and then raised one and passed it over her fore-

head in a dazed sort of way. She staggered, and I believe she would have fallen if her lover in the play hadn't supported her.

"The curtain had started to descend, when she seemed to pull herself together. She pushed the poor actor aside with a strength that sent him spinning, and began to speak. Her voice had lost all of its wonderful music, however, and was rough and rasping. Her grace was gone, too—Heaven only knows how! She was positively awkward. And her words—they couldn't have had anything to do with her part. They were incoherent ravings. The curtain had started to go up again. Evidently, the stage manager had thought the crisis was past when she began to speak. But when she only made matters worse, it came down with a rush. After a maddening delay, her manager came out, looking wild enough himself, and announced, with many apologies, that Miss Lund had suffered a temporary nervous breakdown.'

Nick Carter had listened intently, now and then scanning the article which described the affair.

"Too bad!" he commented soberly, when Ida had finished. "But haven't you any explanation, either? The paper doesn't seem to have any—at least, it doesn't give any."

A curious expression crossed Ida's face.

"I had forgotten for the moment," she replied. "I haven't told you one of the strangest things about it. In common with everybody else, I was so engrossed in watching Helga Lund's face that I didn't have much time for anything else. That is why there wasn't a more general attempt to see whom she was looking at. We wouldn't ordinarily have been very curious, but she held our gaze so compellingly. I did manage to tear my eyes away once, though; but I wasn't in a position to see—I was too far to one side. She appeared to be looking at some one almost on a line with our box, but over toward the other side of the theater. I turned my glasses in that direction for a few moments and thought I located the person, a man, but, of course, I couldn't be sure. I could only see his profile, but his expression seemed to be very set, and he was leaning forward a little, in a tense sort of way."

Nick nodded, as if Ida's words had confirmed some theory which he had already formed.

"But what was so strange about him?" he prompted.

"Oh, it doesn't mean anything, of course," was the reply; "but he bore the most startling resemblance to Doctor Hiram Grantley. If I hadn't known that Grantley was safe in Sing Sing for a long term of years, I'm afraid I would have sworn that it was he."

The detective gave Ida a keen, slightly startled look.

"Well, stranger things than that have happened in our experience," he commented thoughtfully. "I haven't any reason to believe, though, that Grantley is at large again. He would be quite capable of what you have described, but surely Kennedy would have notified me before this if——"

The telephone had just rung, and, before Nick could finish his sentence, Joseph, his butler, entered. His announcement caused a sensation. It was:

"Long distance, Mr. Carter. Warden Kennedy, of Sing Sing, wishes to speak with you."

The detective got up quickly, without comment, and stepped out into the hall, where the nearest instrument or the several in the house was located.

Patsy Garvan gave a low, expressive whisper.

"Suffering catfish!" he ejaculated. "It looks as if you were right, Ida!"

After that he relapsed into silence and listened, with the others. Nick had evidently interrupted the warden.

"Just a moment, Kennedy," they heard him saying. "I think I can guess what you have to tell me. It's Doctor Grantley who has escaped, isn't it?"

Naturally, the warden's reply was inaudible, but the detective's next words were sufficient confirmation.

"I thought so," Nick said, in a significant tone. "One of my assistants was just telling me of having seen, last night, a man who looked surprisingly like him. When did you find out that he was missing? . . . As early as that? . . . I see. . . . Yes, I'll come up, if necessary, as soon as I can; but first I must set the ball rolling here. I think we already have a clew. I'll call you up later. . . . Yes, certainly. . . . Yes, good-by!"

A moment later he returned to the dining room.

"Maybe your eyes didn't deceive you, after all, Ida," he announced gravely. "Grantley escaped last night—in time to have reached the theater for the third act of that special performance, if not earlier. And it looks as if he subjected one of the keepers of the prison to an ordeal somewhat similar to that which Helga Lund seems to have endured."

CHAPTER II.

ESCAPE BY SCHEDULE.

"What do you mean by that, chief?" demanded Chick.

"Kennedy says that one of the keepers was found, in a peculiar sort of stupor, as he calls it, in Grantley's cell, after the surgeon had gone. He had evidently been overpowered in some way, and his keys had been taken from him. Kennedy assumes, rightly enough, I suppose, that Grantley lured him into the cell on some pretext, and then tried his tricks. The man is still unconscious, and the prison physician can do nothing to help him. Kennedy wants me to come up."

"But I don't see what that has to do with Helga Lund," objected Chick. "Even if it was Grantley that Ida saw—which remains to be proved—I don't see any similarity. He didn't render her unconscious, and, anyway, he wasn't near enough to——"

"Think it over, Chick," the detective interrupted. "The significance will reach you, by slow freight, sooner or later, I'm sure. I, for one, haven't any doubt that Ida saw the fugitive last night. If so, Grantley did a very daring thing to go there without any attempt at disguise—not as daring as might be supposed, however. He doubtless counted on just what happened. If any one who knew him by sight had noticed him in the theater, the supposition would naturally be that it was a misleading resemblance, for the chances were that any one who would be likely to know him would be aware of his conviction, and be firmly convinced that he was up the river.

"There doesn't seem to be any doubt that he disguised himself carefully enough for his flight from Sing Sing, and covered his tracks with unusual care, for Kennedy has been unable to obtain any reliable information about his movements. If he was at the play, we may be sure that he restored his normal appearance deliberately, in defiance of the risks involved, in order that one person, at

least, should recognize him without fail—that person being Helga Lund. And that implies that he was again actuated primarily by motives of private revenge, as in the case of Baldwin.

"The scoundrel seems to have a supply of enemies in reserve, and is willing to go to any lengths in order to revenge himself upon them for real or fancied grievances. If he's the man who broke up Lund's performance last night, it is obvious that he knew of the special occasion and the unusual hour before he made his escape. In fact, it seems probable that he escaped when he did for the purpose of committing this latest outrage. Even if his chief object has been attained, however, I don't imagine he will return to Sing Sing and give himself up. We shall have to get busy, and, perhaps, keep so for some time. Plainly, the first thing for me to do is to seek an interview with Helga Lund, if she is in a condition to receive me. She can tell, if she will, who or what it was that caused her breakdown. If there turns out to be no way of connecting it with Grantley, we shall have to begin our work at Sing Sing. If it was Grantley, we shall begin here. Did you see anything more of the man you noticed, Ida?"

"Nothing more worth mentioning. He slipped out quickly as soon as the curtain went down; but lots of others were doing the same, although many remained and exchanged excited conjectures. I left the box when I saw him going, but by the time I reached the lobby he was nowhere in sight, and I couldn't find any one who had noticed him."

"Too bad! Then there's nothing to do but try to see Helga. The rest of you had better hang around the house until you hear from me. Whatever the outcome, I shall probably want you all on the jump before long."

Nick hastily finished his breakfast, while his assistants read him snatches from the accounts in the various morning newspapers. In that way he got the gist of all that had been printed in explanation of the actress' "attack" and in regard to her later condition.

All of the accounts agreed in saying that Helga Lund was in seclusion at her hotel, in a greatly overwrought state, and that two specialists and a nurse were in attendance.

The prospect of a personal interview with her seemed exceedingly remote; but Nick Carter meant to do his best, unless her condition absolutely forbade.

* * * * * * *

Doctor Hiram A. Grantley was very well, if not favorably, known to the detectives, in addition to thousands of others.

For a quarter of a century he had been famous as an exceptionally daring and skillful surgeon. In recent years, however, his great reputation had suffered from a blight, due to his general eccentricities, and, in particular, to his many heartless experiments upon live animals.

At length, he had gone so far as to perform uncalled-for operations on human beings in his ruthless search for knowledge.

Nick Carter had heard rumors of this, and had set a trap for Grantley. He had caught the surgeon and several younger satellites red-handed.

Their victim at that time was a young Jewish girl, whose heart had been cruelly lifted out of the chest cavity, without severing any of the arteries or veins, despite the fact that the girl had sought treatment only for consumption.

Grantley and his accomplices had been placed on trial, charged with manslaughter. The case was a complicated one, and the jury disagreed. The authorities subsequently released the prisoners in the belief that the chances for a conviction were not bright enough to warrant the great expense of a new trial.

Nevertheless, as a result of the agitation, a law was passed, which attached a severe penalty to all such unjustifiable experiments or operations on human beings.

After a few weeks of freedom, Grantley had committed a still more atrocious crime. His victim in this instance had been one of the most prominent financiers in New York, J. Hackley Baldwin, who had been totally blind for years.

For years Grantley had been nursing two grievances against the afflicted millionaire. Under pretense of operating on Baldwin's eyes—after securing the financier's complete confidence—he had removed parts of his patient's brain.

Owing to Grantley's great skill, the operation had not proved fatal; but Baldwin became a hopeless imbecile.

Nick Carter and his assistants again captured the fugitive, who had fled with his assistant, Doctor Siebold. This pair was locked up, together with a nurse and Grantley's German manservant, who were also involved.

To these four defendants, Nick presently added a fifth, in the person of Felix Simmons, another famous financier, who had been a bitter rival of Baldwin's for years, and who was found to have aided and abetted the rascally surgeon.

It was a startling disclosure, and all of the prisoners were convicted under the new law and sentenced to long terms of confinement.

That had been several months before; and now Doctor Grantley was at large again, and under suspicion of having been guilty of some strange and mysterious offense against the celebrated Swedish actress, who had never before visited this country.

* * * * * * *

Nick had learned from the papers that Helga Lund was staying at the Wentworth-Belding Hotel. Accordingly, he drove there in one of his motor cars and sent a card up to her suite. On it he scribbled a request for a word with one of the physicians or the nurse.

Doctor Lightfoot, a well-known New York physician, with a large practice among theatrical people, received him in one of the rooms of the actress' suite.

He seemed surprised at the detective's presence, but Nick quickly explained matters to his satisfaction. Miss Lund, it seemed, was in a serious condition. She had gone to pieces mentally, passed a sleepless night, most of the time walking the floor, and appeared to be haunted by the conviction that her career was at an end.

She declared that she would not mind so much if it had happened before any ordinary audience, but as it was, she had made a spectacle of herself before hundreds of the members of her own profession. That thought almost crazed her, and she insisted wildly that she would never regain enough confidence to appear in public again.

If that was the case, it was nothing short of a tragedy, in view of her great gifts.

Doctor Lightfoot hoped, however, that she would ultimately recover from the shock of her experience, although he stated that it would be months, at least, before she was herself again. Meanwhile, all of her engagements would have to be canceled, of course.

In response to Nick's questions, the physician assured him that Helga Lund had given no adequate explanation of her startling behavior of the night before. She had simply said that she had recognized some one in the audience, that the recognition had brought up painful memories, and that she had completely forgotten her lines and talked at random. She did not know what she had said or done.

Her physicians realized that she was keeping something back, and had pleaded with her to confide fully in them as a means of relieving her mind from the weight that was so evidently pressing upon it. But she had refused to do so, having declared that it would serve no good purpose, and that the most they could do was to restore her shattered nerves.

The detective was not surprised at this attitude, which, as a matter of fact, paved the way to an interview with the actress.

"In that case I think you will have reason to be glad I came," he told Doctor Lightfoot. "I believe I know, in general, what happened last night, and if you will give me your permission to see Miss Lund alone for half an hour, I have hope of being able to induce her to confide in me. My errand does not reflect upon her in any way, nor does it imply the slightest danger or embarrassment to her, so far as I am aware. My real interest lies elsewhere, but you will readily understand how it might help her and reenforce your efforts if I could induce her to unbosom herself."

"There isn't any doubt about that, Carter," was the doctor's reply; "but it's a risky business. She is in a highly excitable state, and uninvited calls from men of your profession are not apt to be soothing, no matter what their object may be. How do you know that some ghost of remorse is not haunting her If so, you would do much more harm than good."

"If she saw the person I think she saw in the audience last night," Nick replied, "it's ten to one that the remorse is on the other side—or ought to be. If I am mistaken, a very few sentences will prove it, and I give you my word that I shall do my best to quiet any fears my presence may have aroused, and withdraw at once. On the other hand, if I am right, I can convince her that I am her friend, and that I know enough to make it worth her while to shift as much of her burden as possible to me. If she consents, the tension will be removed at once, and she will be on the road to recovery. And, incidentally, I shall have gained some very important information."

The detective was prepared, if necessary, to be more explicit with Doctor Lightfoot; but the latter, after looking Nick over thoughtfully for a few moments, gave his consent.

"I've always understood that you always know what you are about, Carter," he said. "There is nothing of the blunderer or the brute about you, as there is about almost all detectives. On the contrary, I am sure you are capable of using a great deal of tact, aside from your warm sympathies. My colleague isn't here now, and I am taking a great responsibility on my shoulders in giving you permission to see Miss Lund alone at such a time. She is a great actress, remember, and, if it is possible, we must give her back to the world with all of her splendid powers unimpaired. She is like a musical instrument of incredible delicacy, so, for Heaven's sake, don't handle her as if she were a hurdy-gurdy!"

"Trust me," the famous detective said quietly.

"Then wait," was the reply, and the physician hurried from the room.

Two or three minutes later he returned.

"Come," he said. "I have prepared her—told her you are a specialist in psychology, which is true, of course, in one sense. You can tell her the truth later, if all goes well."

CHAPTER III.

THE ACTRESS CONFIDES.

Nick was led through a couple of sumptuously furnished rooms into the great Swedish actress' presence.

Helga Lund was a magnificently proportioned woman, well above medium height, and about thirty years of age.

She wore a loose, filmy negligee of silk and lace, and its pale blue was singularly becoming to her fair skin and golden hair. Two thick, heavy ropes of the latter hung down far below her waist.

She was not merely pretty, but something infinitely better—she had the rugged statuesque beauty of a goddess in face and form.

She was pacing the floor like a caged lioness when Nick entered. Her head was thrown back and her hands were clasped across her forehead, allowing the full sleeves to fall away from her perfectly formed, milk-white arms.

"Miss Lund, this is Mr. Carter, of whom I spoke," Doctor Lightfoot said gently. "He believes he can help you. "I shall leave you with him, but I will be within call."

He withdrew softly and closed the door. They were alone.

The actress turned for the first time, and a pang shot through the tender-hearted detective as he saw the tortured expression of her face.

She nodded absent-mindedly, but did not speak.

"Miss Lund," the detective began, "I trust you will believe that I would not have intruded at this time if I hadn't believed that I might possibly possess the key to last night's unfortunate occurrence, and that——"

"You—the key? Impossible, sir?" the actress interrupted, in the precise but rather labored English which she had acquired in a surprisingly short time in anticipation of her American tour.

"We shall soon be able to tell," Nick replied. "If I am wrong, I assure you that I shall not trouble you any further. If I am right, however, I hope to be able to help you. In any case, you may take it for granted that I am not trying to pry into your affairs. I have seen you on the stage more than once, both here and abroad. It is needless to say that I have the greatest admiration for your genius. Beyond that I know nothing about you, except what I have read."

"Then, will you explain—briefly? You see that I am in no condition to talk."

"I see that talking, of the right kind, would be the

best thing for you, if the floodgates could be opened, Miss Lund," Nick answered sympathetically. "I shall do better than explain; with your permission, I shall ask you a question."

"What is it?"

"Simply this: Are you acquainted with a New York surgeon who goes by the name of Doctor Grantley—Hiram A. Grantley?"

The actress, who had remained standing, started slightly at the detective's words. Her bosom rose and fell tumultuously, and her clenched hands were raised to it, as Ida Jones had described them.

A look of mingled amazement and fright overspread her face.

Nick did not wait for her to reply, nor did he tell her that it was unnecessary. Nevertheless, he had already received his answer and it gave him the greatest satisfaction.

He was on the right track.

"Before you reply, let me say this," he went on quickly, in order to convince her that she had nothing to fear from him: "Grantley is one of the worst criminals living, and it is solely because our laws are still inadequate in certain ways that he is alive to-day. As it is, he is a fugitive, an escaped prisoner, with a long term still to serve. He escaped last night, but he will undoubtedly be caught soon, despite his undeniable cleverness, and returned to the cell which awaits him. Now you may answer, if you please."

He was, of course, unaware of the extent of Helga Lund's knowledge of Grantley. It might not be news to her, but he wished—in view of the actress' evident fear of Grantley—to prove to her that he himself could not possibly be there in the surgeon's interest.

His purpose seemed to have been gained. Unless he was greatly mistaken, a distinct relief mingled with the surprise which was stamped on Helga's face.

"He is a—criminal, you say?" she breathed eagerly, leaning forward, forgetful that she had not admitted any knowledge of Grantley at all.

"You do not know what has happened to Doctor Grantley here in the last year?"

"No," was the reply. "I have never been in America before, and I have never even acted in England. I do not read the papers in English."

"You met Grantley abroad, then, some years ago, perhaps?"

The actress realized that she had committed herself. She delayed for some time before she replied, and when she did, it was with a graceful gesture of surrender.

"I will tell you all there is to tell, Mr. Carter," she said, "if you will give me your word as a gentleman that the facts will not be communicated to the newspapers until I give you permission. Will you? I think I have guessed your profession, but I am sure I have correctly gauged your honor."

"I promise you that no word will find its way, prematurely, into print through me," Nick declared readily. "I am a detective, as you seem to have surmised, Miss Lund. I called on you, primarily, to get a clew to the whereabouts of Doctor Grantley, but, as I told you, I am confident that it will have a beneficial effect on you to relieve your mind and to be assured, in return, that Grantley is a marked and hunted man, and that every effort will be made to prevent him from molesting you any further."

"Thank you, Mr. Carter," the actress responded, throwing herself down on a couch and tucking her feet under her.

The act suggested that her mental tension was already lessened to a considerable degree.

"There is very little to tell," she went on, after a slight pause, "and I should certainly have confided in my physicians if I had seen any use in doing so. It is nothing I need be ashamed of, I assure you. I did meet Doctor Grantley—to my sorrow—five years ago, in Paris. He was touring Europe at the time, and I was playing in the French capital. He was introduced to me as a distinguished American surgeon, and at first I found him decidedly interesting, despite—or, perhaps, because of—his eccentricities. Almost at once, however, he began to pay violent court to me. He was much older than I, and I could not think of him as a husband without a shudder. With all his brilliancy, there was something sinister and cruel about him, even then. I tried to dismiss him as gently as I knew how, but he would not admit defeat. He persisted in his odious attentions, and one day he seized me in his arms and was covering my face and neck with his detestable kisses, when a good friend, a young Englishman, was announced. My friend was big and powerful, a trained athlete. I was burning with shame and rage. I turned Doctor Grantley over to his tender mercies and left the room. Doctor Grantley was very strong, but he was no match for the Englishman. I am afraid he was maltreated rather severely. At any rate, he was thrown out of the hotel, and I did not see him again until last night. He wrote me a threatening letter, however, to the effect that he would have his revenge some day and ruin my career.

"I was greatly frightened at first, but, as time passed and nothing happened, I forgot him. Last night, those terrible, compelling eyes of his drew mine irresistibly. I simply had to look toward him, and when I did so, my heart seemed to turn to a lump of ice. I forgot my lines—everything. I knew what he meant to do, but I could not resist him. He was my master, and he was killing my art, my mastery. I was a child, a witless fool, in his hands. My brain was in chaos. I tried to rally my forces, to go on with my part, but it was impossible. I did manage to speak, but I do not know what I said, and no one will tell me. Doubtless, I babbled or raved, and the words were not mine. They were words of delirium, or, worse still, words which his powerful brain of evil put into my mouth."

Helga Lund halted abruptly and threw out her hands again in an expressive gesture.

"That is all, Mr. Carter," she added. "It was not my guilty conscience which made me afraid of him, you see. As for his whereabouts, I can tell you nothing. I did not know that he had been in trouble, although I am not surprised. I had neither heard nor seen anything of him since he wrote me, five years ago. Consequently, I fear I can be of no assistance to you in locating him—unless he should make another attempt of some sort on me, and Heaven forbid that!"

"I have learned that he was here last night," said Nick, "and that is all I hoped for. That will give us a point of departure. I assure you that I greatly appreciate your confidence, and that I shall not violate it. With your per-

mission, I shall tell your physicians just enough, in general terms, to give them a better understanding of your trouble. It will be best, for the present, to let the public believe that you are the victim of a temporary nervous breakdown, but I should strongly advise you to allow the facts to become known as soon as Grantley is captured. It will be good advertising, as we say over here, and, at the same time, it will stop gossip and dispel the mystery. It will also serve to reassure your many admirers, because it will give, for the first time, an adequate explanation, and prove that the cause of your mental disturbance has been removed."

The actress agreed to this, and Nick Carter took leave of her, after promising to apprehend Grantley as soon as possible and to keep her informed of the progress of his search.

Before he left the hotel he had a short talk with Doctor Lightfoot, which gave promise of a more intelligent handling of the case, aside from the benefit which Helga Lund had already derived from her frank talk with the sympathetic detective.

The man hunt could now begin in New York City, instead of at Ossining, and, since the preliminaries could be safely intrusted to his assistants, Nick decided to comply with Warden Kennedy's urgent request and run up to the prison to see what he could make of the keeper's condition.

CHAPTER IV.

STRONGER THAN BOLTS AND BARS.

The great detective set his men to work and called up the prison before leaving New York. As a result of the telephone conversation, the warden gave up the search for the fugitive in the neighborhood of Ossining.

Ossining is up the Hudson, about an hour's ride, by train, from the metropolis. It did not take Nick long to reach his destination.

He found Warden Kennedy in the latter's office, and listened to a characteristic account of Doctor Grantley's escape, which—in view of the fugitive's subsequent appearance at the theater—need not be repeated here.

Bradley, the keeper, was still unconscious, and nobody seemed to know what was the matter with him. Nick had a theory, which almost amounted to a certainty; but it remained to confirm it by a personal examination.

The warden presently led the way to the prison hospital, where the unfortunate keeper lay. No second glance was necessary to convince the detective that he had been right.

The man was in a sort of semirigid state, curiously like that of a trance. All ordinary restoratives had been tried and had failed, yet there did not appear to be anything alarming about his condition.

The prison physician started to describe the efforts which had been made, but Nick interrupted him quietly.

"Never mind about that, doctor," he said. "I know what is the matter with him, and I believe I can revive him—unless Grantley has blocked the way."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Kennedy and the doctor, in concert. "What is it?" added the former, while the latter demanded: "What do you mean by 'blocking the way'?"

"Your ex-guest hypnotized him, Kennedy," was the simple reply, "and, as I have had more or less experience along that line myself, I ought to be able to bring Bradley out of the hypnotic sleep, provided the man who plunged him into it did not impress upon his victim's mind too strong a suggestion to the contrary. Grantley has gone deep into hypnotism, and it is possible that he has discovered some way of preventing a third person from reviving his subjects. There would have been nothing for him to gain by it in this case, but he may—out of mere malice—have thrown Bradley under a spell which no one but he can break. Let us hope not, however."

"Hypnotism, eh?" ejaculated Kennedy. "By the powers, why didn't we think of that, doctor?"

The prison physician hastily sought an excuse for his ignorance, but, as a matter of fact, he could not be greatly blamed. He was not one of the shining lights of his profession, as his not very tempting position proved, and comparatively few medical practitioners have had any practical experience with hypnotism or its occasional victims.

Nick Carter, on the other hand, had made an exhaustive study of the subject, both from a theoretical and a practical standpoint, and had often had occasion to utilize his extensive knowledge.

While Warden Kennedy, the physician, and a couple of nurses leaned forward curiously, the detective bent over the figure on the narrow white bed and rubbed the forehead and eyes a few times, in a peculiar way.

Then he spoke to the man.

"Come, wake up, Bradley!" he said commandingly. "I want you! You're conscious! You're answering me. You cannot resist! Get up!"

And to the amazement of the onlookers, the keeper opened his eyes in a dazed, uncomprehending sort of way, threw his feet over the edge of the bed, and sat up.

"What is it? Where have I been?" he asked, looking about him. And then he added, in astonishment: "What—what am I doing here?"

"You've been taking a long nap, but you're all right now, Bradley," the detective assured him. "You remember what happened, don't you?"

For a few moments the man's face was blank, but soon a look of shamed understanding, mingled with resentment, overspread it.

"It was that cursed Number Sixty Thousand One Hundred and Thirteen!" he exclaimed, giving Grantley's prison number. "He called to me, while I was making my rounds—was it last night?"

Nick nodded, and the keeper went on:

"What do you know about that! Is he gone?"

This time it was the warden who replied.

"Yes, he's skipped, Bradley; but we know he was down in New York later in the night, and Carter here can be counted on to bring him back, sooner or later."

Kennedy had begun mildly enough, owing to the experience which his subordinate had so recently undergone, but, at this point, the autocrat in him got the better of his sympathy.

"What the devil did you mean, though, by going into his cell, keys and all, like a confounded imbecile?" he demanded harshly. "Isn't that the first thing you had drilled into that reënforced-concrete dome of yours—not to give any of these fellows a chance to jump you when you have your keys with you? If you hadn't fallen for his little game——"

"But I didn't fall for nothing, warden!" the keeper

interrupted warmly. "I didn't go into his cell at all. I know better than that, believe me!"

"You didn't—what? What are you trying to put over, Bradley?" Kennedy burst out. "You were found in his cell, with the door unlocked and the keys gone, not to mention Number Sixty Thousand One Hundred and Thirteen, curse him! Maybe that ain't proof."

"It ain't proof," insisted the keeper, "no matter how it looks. He called to me, and I started toward the grating to see what he wanted. He fixed his eyes on me, like he was looking me through and through, and made some funny motions with his hands. I'll swear that's all I remember. If I was found in his cell, I don't know how I got there, or anything about it, so help me!"

The warden started to give Bradley another tongue-lashing, but Nick interposed.

"He's telling the truth, Kennedy," he said.

"But how in thunder——"

"Very easily. It hadn't occurred to me before, but it is evident that Grantley hypnotized him through the bars and then commanded him to unlock the door and come inside. There is nothing in hypnotism to interfere; on the contrary, that would be the easiest and surest thing to do, under the circumstances. Grantley is too clever to try any of the old, outworn devices—such as feigning sickness, for instance—in order to get a keeper in his power. All that was necessary was for him to catch Bradley's eye. The rest was as easy as rolling off a log. When he got our friend inside, he put him to sleep, took his keys and his outer clothing, and then—good-by, Sing Sing! It's rather strange that he succeeded in getting away without discovery of the deception, but he evidently did; or else he bribed somebody. You might look into that possibility, if you think best. The supposition isn't essential, however, for accident, or good luck, might easily have aided him. As for the means he used to cover his trail after leaving the vicinity of the prison, we need not waste any time over that question. Fortunately, we have hit upon his trail down the river, and all that remains to do is to keep on it, in the right direction, until we come up with him. It may be a matter of hours or days or months, but Grantley is going to be brought back here before we're through. You can bank on that, gentlemen. And when I return him to you it will be up to you to take some extraordinary precautions to see that he doesn't hypnotize any more keepers."

"I guess that's right, Carter," agreed Warden Kennedy, tugging at his big mustache. "Bolts and bars are no good to keep in a man like that, who can make anybody let him out just by looking at him and telling him to hand over the keys. I suppose I'd have done it, too, if I'd been in Bradley's place."

"Exactly!" the detective responded, with a laugh. "You couldn't have helped yourself. Don't worry, though. I think we can keep him from trying any more tricks of that sort, when we turn him over to you again."

"Hanged if I see how, unless we give him a dose of solitary confinement, in a dark cell, and have the men blindfold themselves when they poke his food in through the grating."

"That won't be necessary," Nick assured the warden as he prepared to leave. "We can get around it easier than that."

Half an hour later Nick was on his way back to New York City.

He was not as light-hearted or confident as he had allowed Warden Kennedy to suppose, however.

The fact that Grantley had turned to that mysterious and terrifying agency, hypnotism, with all of its many evil possibilities, caused him profound disquiet.

Already the fugitive had used his mastery of the uncanny force in two widely different ways. He had escaped from prison with startling ease by means of it, and then, not content with that, he had hypnotized a famous actress in the midst of one of her greatest triumphs—for Nick had known all along that Helga Lund had yielded to hypnotic influence.

If the escaped convict kept on in the way he had begun, there was no means of foretelling the character or extent of his future crimes, in case he was not speedily brought to bay.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRAIL VANISHES.

Grantley's trail vanished into thin air—or seemed to—very quickly.

Nick Carter and his assistants had comparatively little trouble in finding the hotel which the fugitive had patronized the night before, but their success amounted to little.

Grantley had arrived there at almost one o'clock in the morning and signed an assumed name on the register. He brought a couple of heavy suit cases with him.

He had not been in prison long enough to acquire the characteristic prison pallor to an unmistakable degree, and a wig had evidently concealed his closely cropped hair.

He was assigned to an expensive room, but left his newly acquired key at the desk a few minutes later, and sallied forth on foot.

The night clerk thought nothing of his departure at the time, owing to the fact that the Times Square hotel section is quite accustomed to the keeping of untimely hours.

That was the last any of the hotel staff had seen of him, however. His baggage was still in his room, but, upon investigation, it was found to contain an array of useless and valueless odds and ends, obviously thrown in merely to give weight and bulk. In other words, the suit cases had been packed in anticipation of their abandonment.

It seemed likely that the doctor had had at least one accomplice in his flight, for the purpose of aiding him in his arrangements. But not necessarily so.

If he had received such assistance, it was quite possible that one of the six young physicians, who had formerly been associated with him in his unlawful experiments, had lent the helping hand.

Nick had kept track of them for some time, and now he determined to look them up again.

It was significant, however, that Grantley had, apparently, made no provision for the escape of Doctor Siebold, his assistant, who had been in Sing Sing with him.

In the flight which had followed their ghastly crime against the blind financier, Siebold had shown the white feather, and it was easy to believe that the stern, implacable Grantley had no further use for his erstwhile associate.

There was no reason to doubt that the escaped con-

vict had gone directly to the theater after leaving the hotel. But why had he gone to the latter at all, and what had become of him after he had broken up Helga Lund's play?

There was no reasonable doubt that Grantley had disguised himself pretty effectually for his flight from Ossining to New York, and yet the night clerk's description was that of Grantley himself.

It followed, therefore, that the fugitive had already shed his disguise somewhere in the big city. But why not have gone directly from that stopping place, wherever it was, to the theater?

Nick gave it up as unimportant. The hotel episode did not seem to have served any desirable purpose, from Grantley's standpoint, unless on the theory that it was simply meant to confuse the detectives.

However that might be, it would be much more worth while to know what the surgeon's movements had been after his dastardly attack on the actress.

Had he gone to another hotel, in disguise or otherwise? Had he returned to his former house in the Bronx, which had been closed up since his removal to Sing Sing? Had he left town, or—well, done any one of a number of things?

There was room only for shrewd guesswork, for the most part.

An exhaustive search of the hotels failed to reveal his presence at any of them that night or later. The closed house in the Bronx was inspected, with a similar result.

That was about as far as the detective got along that line. Nick had a feeling that the fellow was still in New York. He had once tried to slip away in an unusually clever fashion, and had come to grief. It was fair to assume, therefore, that he would not make a second attempt, especially in view of the fact that the metropolis offers countless hiding places and countless multitudes to shield a fugitive.

If he was still in the city, though, he was almost unquestionably in disguise; and he could be counted on to see that that disguise was an exceptionally good one.

Certainly, the prospect was not an encouraging one. The proverbial needle in a haystack would have been easy to find in comparison.

And, meanwhile, Helga Lund would not know what real peace of mind was until she was informed that her vindictive persecutor had been captured.

Three days was spent in this fruitless tracking, and then, in the absence of tangible clews, the great detective turned to something which had often met with surprising success in the past.

He banished everything else from his mind and tried to put himself, in imagination, in Doctor Grantley's place.

What would this brilliant, erratic, but misguided genius, with all of his unbridled enmities and his criminal propensities, have done that night, after having escaped from prison and brought Helga Lund's performance to such an untimely and harrowing close?

It was clear that much depended on the depth of his hatred for the actress who had repulsed him five years before. Undoubtedly his enmity for the beautiful Swede was great, else he would not have timed his escape as he had done, or put the first hours of his liberty to such a use.

But would he have been content with what he had done that first night? If he had considered his end accomplished, he might have shaken the dust of New York from his feet at once. On the other hand, if his thirst for revenge had not yet been slaked, it was probable that he was still lurking near, ready to follow up his first blow with others.

The more Nick thought about it the more certain he became that the latter supposition was nearer the truth than the former. Grantley had caused Helga Lund to break down completely before one of the most important and critical audiences that had ever been assembled in New York, to be sure, but, with a man of his type, was that likely to be anything more than the first step?

He had threatened to ruin her career, and he was nothing if not thorough in whatever he attempted. Therefore—so Nick reasoned—further trouble might be looked for in that quarter.

The thought was an unwelcome one. The detective had taken every practicable precaution to shield Helga from further molestation, but he knew only too well that Grantley's attacks were of a sort which usually defied ordinary safeguards.

The possibility of new danger to the actress spurred Nick on to added concentration.

Assuming that Grantley was still in New York, in disguise, and bent upon inflicting additional injury on the woman he had once loved, where would he be likely to hide himself, and what would be the probable nature of his next move?

The detective answered his last question first, after much weighing of possibilities.

Grantley was one of the most dangerous of criminals, simply because his methods were about as far removed as possible from the ordinary methods of criminals. He had confined himself, thus far, to crimes in which he had made use of his immense scientific knowledge, surgical and hypnotic.

Accordingly, the chances were that he would work along one of those two lines in the future, or else along some other, in which his special knowledge would be the determining factor.

Moreover, since his escape, he had repeatedly called his mastery of hypnotism to his aid. That being so, Nick was inclined to believe that he would continue to use it, especially since Helga had shown herself so susceptible to hypnotic influence.

Could the detective guard against that?

He vowed to do his best, notwithstanding the many difficulties involved.

But it was not until he had carefully balanced the probabilities in regard to Grantley's whereabouts that Nick became seriously alarmed.

As a consequence of his study of the problem, an overwhelming conviction came to him that it would be just like the rascally surgeon to have gone to Helga's own hotel, under another name.

The luxurious Wentworth-Belding would be as safe for the fugitive as any other place, providing his disguise was adequate—safer, in fact, for it was the very last place which would ordinarily fall under suspicion.

In addition to that great advantage, it offered the best opportunity to keep in touch with developments in connection with the actress' condition, and residence there promised comparatively easy access to Helga when the

time should come for the next act in the drama of revenge.

This astounding suspicion had sprung up, full-fledged, in Nick's brain in the space of a second. The detective knew that his preliminary reasoning had been sound, however, and based upon a thorough knowledge of Grantley's characteristic methods.

It was staggering, but his keen intuition told him that it was true. He was now certain that Grantley would be found housed under the same huge roof as his latest victim, and that meant that Helga's danger was greater than ever.

The next blow might fall at any minute.

It was very surprising, in fact, that Grantley had remained inactive so long.

The detective hastily but effectively disguised himself, left word for his assistants, and hurried to the hotel—only to find that his flash of inspiration had come a little too late.

Helga Lund had mysteriously disappeared.

CHAPTER VI.

HELGA IS AMONG THE MISSING.

Doctor Lightfoot, the actress' physician, was greatly excited and had just telephoned to Nick's house, after the detective had left for the hotel.

The doctor had arrived there about half an hour before, for his regular morning visit. To his consternation he had found the night nurse stretched out on Helga Lund's bed, unconscious, and clad only in her undergarments.

The actress was nowhere to be found.

The anxious Lightfoot was of very different caliber from the prison physician at Sing Sing. He had recognized the nurse's symptoms at once, and knew that she had been hypnotized.

He set to work at once to revive her and succeeded in doing so, after some little delay. As soon as she was in a condition to question, he pressed her for all the details she could give.

They were meager enough, but sufficiently disquieting. According to her story, a man whom she had supposed to be Lightfoot himself had gained entrance to the suite between nine and ten o'clock at night.

He had sent up Doctor Lightfoot's name, and his appearance, when she saw him, had coincided with that of the attending physician. He had acted rather strangely, to be sure, and the nurse had been surprised at his presence at that hour, owing to the fact that Lightfoot had already made his two regular calls that day.

Before her surprise had had time to become full-fledged suspicion, however, the intruder had fixed her commandingly with his eyes and she had found herself powerless to resist the weakness of will which had frightened her.

She dimly remembered that he had approached her slowly, nearer and nearer, and that his gleaming eyes had seemed to be two coals of fire in his head.

That was all she recalled, except that she had felt her senses reeling and leaving her. She had known no more until Doctor Lightfoot broke the dread spell, almost twelve hours afterward.

She had met the bogus Lightfoot in one of the outer rooms of the suite, not in the presence of the actress. Miss Lund had been in her bedroom at the time, but had not yet retired.

The nurse was horror-stricken to learn that her patient was missing, and equally at a loss to explain how she herself came to be without her uniform.

But Doctor Lightfoot possessed a sufficiently analytical mind to enable him to solve the puzzle, after a fashion, even before Nick arrived.

The detective had told him that the sight of an enemy of the actress' had caused her seizure, and it was easy to put two and two together. This enemy had doubtless made himself up to represent the attending physician, had hypnotized the nurse, and then passed on, unhindered, to the actress' room.

He had obviously subdued her in the same fashion, after which he had removed the unconscious nurse's uniform and compelled Helga to don it.

The doctor remembered now that the two women were nearly alike in height and build. The nurse had dark-brown hair, in sharp contrast to Helga's golden glory; but a wig could have remedied that. Neither was there any similarity in features, but veils can be counted on to hide such differences.

Doctor Lightfoot, despite his alarm, was rather proud of his ability to reason the thing out alone. He had no doubt that Helga Lund, under hypnotic influence, had accompanied the strange man from the hotel, against her will.

It would have been very easy, with no obstacle worth mentioning to interpose. No one who saw them would have thought it particularly strange to see the nurse and the doctor leaving together. At most, it would have suggested that they were on unusually good terms, and that he was taking her out for an airing in his car.

The keen-witted physician had progressed thus far by the time Nick arrived, but he had not yet sought to verify his deductions by questioning any of the hotel staff.

Nick listened to his theory, put a few additional questions to the nurse, and then complimented Doctor Lightfoot on his analysis.

"That seems to be the way of it," the detective admitted. "A light, three-quarter-length coat, which the nurse often wore over her uniform, is also missing, together with her hat. The distinctive nurse's skirt would have shown beneath the coat and thereby help the deception."

Confidential inquiries were made at once, and the fact was established that the two masqueraders—one voluntary and one involuntary—had left the building about ten o'clock the night before.

The supposed Lightfoot had arrived in a smart, closed town car, which had been near enough to the physician's in appearance to deceive the carriage starter. The chauffeur wore a quiet livery, a copy of that worn by Lightfoot's driver. The car had waited, and the two had ridden away in it.

That was all the hotel people could say. The night clerk had thought it odd that Miss Lund's nurse had not returned, but it was none of his business, of course, if the actress' physician had taken her away.

It was of little importance now, but Nick was curious enough to make inquiries, while he was about it, which brought out the fact that a man had registered at the hotel the morning after the affair at the theater, and had paid his bill and left the evening before.

It might have been only a coincidence, but certain

features of the man's description, as given, left room for the belief that Doctor Grantley had really been at the Wentworth-Belding during that interval.

But where was he now, and what had he done with the unfortunate actress?

Such as it was, the slender clew furnished by the closed car must be followed up for all it was worth.

That was not likely to prove an easy matter, and, unless Grantley had lost his cunning, the trail of the machine would probably lead to nothing, even if it could be followed. Nevertheless, there seemed to be nothing else to work on.

The chauffeur of the car might have been an accomplice, but it was not necessary to suppose so. It looked as if the wily Grantley had hunted up a machine of the same make as Doctor Lightfoot's, and had engaged it for a week or a month, paying for it in advance.

There are many cars to be had in New York on such terms, and they are extensively used by people who wish to give the impression, for a limited time, that they own a fine car.

It is a favorite way of overawing visitors, and chauffeurs in various sorts of livery go with the cars, both being always at the command of the renter.

It would not, therefore, have aroused suspicion if Grantley had furnished a livery of his own choice for his temporary chauffeur.

The first step was to ascertain the make of Doctor Lightfoot's car. Another make might have been used, of course, but it was not likely, since the easiest way to duplicate the machine would have been to chose another having the same lines and color.

"Mine is a Palgrave," the physician informed Nick, in response to the latter's question.

"Humph! That made it easy for Grantley," remarked the detective; "but it won't be so easy for us. The Palgrave is the favorite car for renting by the week or month, and there are numerous places where that particular machine might have been obtained. We'll have to go the rounds."

Nick and his assistants set to work at once, with the help of the telephone directory, which listed the various agencies for automobiles. There were nearly twenty of them, but that meant comparatively little delay, with several investigators at work.

A little over an hour after the search began, Chick "struck oil."

Grantley, disguised as Doctor Lightfoot, had engaged a Palgrave town car of the latest model at an agency on "Automobile Row," as that section of Broadway near Fifty-ninth Street is sometimes called.

The machine had been engaged for a week—not under Lightfoot's name, however—and Grantley had furnished the suit of livery. The car had been used by its transient possessor for the first time the night before, had returned to the garage about eleven o'clock, and had not since been sent for.

The chauffeur was there, and, at Nick's request, the manager sent for him.

The detective was about to learn something of Grantley's movements; but was it to be much, or little?

He feared that the latter would prove to be the case.

CHAPTER VII.

A SHREWD GUESS.

The detective had revealed his identity, and the chauffeur was quite willing to tell all he knew.

He had driven his temporary employer and the woman in nurse's garb to the Yellow Anchor Line pier, near the Battery. Grantley—or Thomas Worthington, as he had called himself in this connection—had volunteered the information that his companion was his niece, who had been sent for suddenly to take care of some one who was to sail on the *Laurentian* at five o'clock in the morning.

Both of the occupants of the car had alighted at the pier, and the man had told the chauffeur not to wait, the explanation being that he might be detained on board for some time.

The pier was a long one, and the chauffeur could not, of course, say whether the pair had actually gone on board the vessel or not. He had obeyed orders and driven away at once.

Neither the man nor the woman had carried any baggage. The chauffeur had gathered that the person who was ill was a relative of both of them, and that the nurse's rather bewildered manner was due to her anxiety and the suddenness of the call.

That was all Nick could learn from him, and an immediate visit to the Yellow Anchor Line's pier was imperative.

There it was learned that a man and woman answering the description given had been noticed in the crowd of people who had come to bid good-by to relatives and friends. One man was sure he had seen them enter a taxi which had just dropped its passengers. When interrogated further, he gave it as his impression that the taxi was a red-and-black machine. He naturally did not notice its number, and no one else could be found who had seen even that much.

A wireless inquiry brought a prompt reply from the *Laurentian*, to the effect that no couple of that description were on board, or had been seen on the vessel the night before.

It was clear that Grantley had made a false trail, for the purpose of throwing off his pursuers. It had been a characteristic move, and no more than Nick had expected.

The detective turned his attention to the taxi clew. Red and black were the distinctive colors of the Flanders-Jackson Taxicab Company's machines. Consequently, the main garage of that concern was next visited.

Luckily, the man at the pier had been right. One of the company's taxis had been at the Yellow Anchor Line pier the previous night, and had picked up a couple of new passengers there, after having been dismissed by those who had originally engaged it.

Nick obtained the name and address of the chauffeur, who was off duty until night. He was not at home when the detective called, but, after a vexatious delay, he was eventually located.

A tip loosened his tongue.

"I remember them well, sir," he declared. "The man looked like a doctor, I thought, and, if I'm not mistaken, the woman had on a nurse's uniform under her long coat. I couldn't see her face, though, on account of the heavy veil she wore. She acted queer—sick or something. The

fellow told me, when they got in, to drive them to the Wentworth-Belding, but when I got up to Fourteenth Street, he said to take them to the Metropolitan Building. I did, and they got out. That's all I know about it. I drove them to the Madison Square side, and they had gone into the building before I started away, but that's the last I saw of them."

"Well, we've traced them one step farther, Chick," Nick remarked to his first assistant as they left, "but we haven't tracked them down, by a long shot. Grantley doubtless went through the Metropolitan Building to Fourth Avenue. There he either took the subway, hailed another taxi, or—hold on, though! Maybe there's something in that! I wonder——"

"Now, what?" Chick asked eagerly.

"You remember Doctor Chester, one of the six young physicians who was mixed up with Grantley in that vivisection case?"

"Of course I do," his assistant answered. "He has taken another name and given up his profession—on the surface, at least. He's living on East Twenty-sixth Street——"

"Exactly—a very few blocks from the Metropolitan Building!" interrupted his chief.

"You mean——"

"I have a 'hunch,' as Patsy would call it, that Grantley has taken Helga Lund to Chester's house. Chester has rented one of those old-fashioned, run-down bricks across from the armory. It's liable to be demolished almost any day, to make way for a new skyscraper, and he doubtless gets it for a song. He can do what he pleases there, and I wouldn't be surprised to find that Grantley had been paying the rent in anticipation of something of this sort. They undoubtedly think that we lost sight of Chester long ago."

"By George! I'll wager you're right, chief!" exclaimed Chick. "The fact that we've traced Grantley to the Metropolitan Building certainly looks significant, in view of Chester's house being so near to it. It's only about five minutes' walk, and a man with Grantley's resourcefulness could easily have made enough changes in his appearance and that of Miss Lund, while in the Metropolitan Building, to have made it impossible for the two who entered Chester's house to be identified with those who had left the Wentworth-Belding an hour or so before."

"That's the way it strikes me," agreed the detective. "And, if the scoundrel took her there last night, they are doubtless there now. I think we're sufficiently justified in forcing our way into the house and searching it, and that without delay. We don't know enough to take the police into our confidence as yet; therefore, the raid will have to be purely on our own responsibility. We must put our theory to the test at once, however, without giving Grantley any more time to harm the actress. Heaven knows he's had enough opportunity to do so already!"

"Right! We can't wait for darkness or reënforcements. It will have to be a daylight job, put through just as we are. If we find ourselves on the wrong scent, Chester will be in a position to make it hot for us—or would be, if he had any standing—but we'll have to risk that."

"Well, if Chester—or Schofield, as he is calling himself now—is tending to his new business as a commercial chemist, he ought to be away at this hour. That remains to be seen, however. I imagine, at any rate, that we can handle any situation that is likely to arise. If time were not so precious, it would be better to have some of the other boys along with us, but we don't know what may be happening at this very moment. Come on. We can plan our campaign on the way."

A couple of tall loft buildings had already replaced part of the old row of houses on the north side of Twenty-sixth Street, beginning at Fourth Avenue. Nick and his assistant entered the second of these and took the elevator to one of the upper floors, from the eastern corridor of which they could obtain a view of the house occupied by young Doctor Chester, together with its approaches, back and front.

The house consisted of a high basement—occupied by a little hand laundry—and three upper stories, the main floor being reached by a flight of iron steps at the front.

Obviously, there was no exit from the body of the house at the rear. There was only a basement door opening into the tiny back yard, and that was connected with the laundry.

The detective decided, as a result of their general knowledge of such houses, not to bother with the back at all. Their plan was to march boldly up the front stairs, outside, fit a skeleton key to the lock, and enter the hall.

They argued that, owing to the fact that the basement was sublet, any crooked work that might be going on would be likely to be confined to the second or third floor to prevent suspicion on the part of those connected with the laundry.

Therefore, they hoped to find the first floor deserted. If that were the case, it was improbable that their entrance would be discovered prematurely.

There was, doubtless, a flight of steps at the rear of the house, leading down to the laundry from the first floor; but they were practically certain that these rear stairs did not ascend above the main floor. If they did not, there was no way of retreat for the occupants of the upper part of the house, except by the front stairs, and, as the detective meant to climb them, it seemed reasonable to suppose that Grantley, Chester & Company could easily be trapped.

Nick and Chick returned to the street and made their way, without the slightest attempt at concealment, toward the suspected house.

They met no one whose recognition was likely to be embarrassing, and saw no faces at the upper windows as they climbed the outer steps.

They had already seen to it that their automatics were handy, and now Nick produced a bunch of skeleton keys and began fitting them, one after another.

The fifth one worked. They stepped into the hall as if they belonged there—taking care to make no noise, however—and gently closed the doors behind them.

The adventure was well under way, and, technically speaking, they were already housebreakers.

CHAPTER VIII.

"HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN!"

The house in which Nick and Chick found themselves had been a good one, but it was now badly in need of repair.

The main hall was comparatively wide for so narrow a building, and a heavy balustrade fenced off the stairs on one side.

The detectives paused just inside the door and listened intently. The doors on the first floor were all closed and the rooms behind them appeared to be untenanted. At any rate, all was still on that floor. Subdued noises of various sorts floated down to them from above, however, seemingly from the third floor.

They looked at each other significantly. Evidently, their theory had been correct—to some extent, at least.

They approached each of the doors in turn, but could hear nothing. Under the stairway they found the expected door leading down to the basement, but, as it was locked, and there was no key, they paid no further attention to it.

Instead, they started to mount the front stairs to the second floor. The stairway was old and rather creaky, but the detectives knew how to step in order to make the least noise. Consequently, they gained the next landing without being discovered.

Here they repeated the tactics they had used below, with a like result. The sound of voices and footfalls were louder now, but they all came from the third floor. The second seemed to be as quiet as the first.

The doors on the second floor, like those on the first, were all closed, but Nick ascertained that at least one of them was unlocked.

That fact might be of great advantage in preventing discovery, in case any one should start down unexpectedly from the third floor, for the halls and stairs offered no place of concealment.

The detectives noiselessly removed their shoes before attempting the last flight, and placed them inside the unlocked room, which they noiselessly closed again.

They were now ready for the final reconnoissance.

By placing the balls of their stockinged feet on the edges of the steps, they succeeded in mounting to the third floor without making any more noise than that produced by the contact of their clothing.

A slight pause at the top served to satisfy them that the noises all proceeded from one room at the front of the house. They were already close to the door of this room, and they listened breathlessly.

Words were plainly audible now, punctuated at frequent intervals by loud bursts of laughter.

It sounded like a merry making of some kind. What was going on behind that closed door? Had they made a mistake in entering the house and wasted precious time in following a will-o'-the-wisp, when Helga Lund might be even then in the greatest danger?

Nick and his assistants feared so, and their hearts sank heavily.

But no. The next words they heard reassured, but, at the same time, startled them. The voice was unmistakably Grantley's.

"That's enough of pantomime," it said, with a peculiar note of cruel, triumphant command. "Now give us your confession from 'The Daughters of Men'—give it, but remember that you are not a great actress, that you are so bad that you would be hooted from the cheapest stage. Remember that you are ugly and dressed in rags, that you are awkward and ungainly in your movements, that your voice is like a file. Remember it not only now, but always. You will never be able to act. Your acting is a nightmare, and you are a fright—when you aren't a joke. But show us what you can do in that confession scene."

Nick and Chick grew tense as they listened to those unbelievable words, and to the heartless chuckles and whisperings with which they were received. Apparently there were several men in the "audience"—probably Chester and some of Grantley's other former accomplices.

The meaning was plain—all too plain.

The proud, beautiful Helga Lund was once more under hypnotic influence, and Grantley, with devilish ingenuity, was impressing suggestions upon her poor, tortured brain, suggestions which were designed to rob her of her great ability, not only for the moment, but, unless their baneful effect could be removed, for all the rest of her life.

She, who had earned the plaudits of royalty in most of the countries of Europe, was being made a show of for the amusement of a handful of ruthless scoffers.

It made the detectives' blood boil in their veins and their hands clench until their knuckles were white, but they managed somehow to keep from betraying themselves.

The employment of hypnotism in such a way was plainly within the scope of the new law against unwarranted operations or experiments on human beings, without their consent; but it was necessary to secure as much evidence as possible before interfering.

To that end Nick Carter took out of a pocket case a curious little instrument, which he was in the habit of calling his "keyhole periscope."

It consisted of a small black tube, about the length and diameter of a lead pencil. There was an eyepiece at one end. At the other a semicircular lens bulged out.

It was designed to serve the same purpose as the periscope of a submarine torpedo boat—that is, to give a view on all sides of a given area at once. The exposed convex lens, when thrust through a keyhole or other small aperture, received images of objects from every angle in the room beyond, and magnified them, in just the same way as the similarly constructed periscope of a submarine projects above the level of the water and gives those in the submerged vessel below a view of all objects on the surface, within a wide radius.

Nick had noted that there was no key in the lock of the door. Taking advantage of that fact, he crept silently forward, inserted the wonderful little instrument in the round upper portion of the hole, and, stooping, applied his eye to the eyepiece.

He could not resist an involuntary start as he caught his first glimpse of the extraordinary scene within.

The whole interior of the room was revealed to him. Around the walls were seated three young men of professional appearance. Nick recognized them all. They were Doctor Chester, Doctor Willard, and Doctor Graves, three of Grantley's former satellites.

They were leaning foward or throwing themselves back in different attitudes of cruel enjoyment and derision, while Grantley stood at one side, his hawklike face thrust out, his keen, pitiless eyes fixed malignantly on the figure in the center of the room.

Nick's heart went out in pity toward that pathetic figure, although he could hardly believe his eyes.

It was that of Helga Lund, but so changed as to be almost unrecognizable.

Her splendid golden hair, hung in a matted, disordered snarl about her face, which was pale and smudged with grime. She was clothed in the cheapest of calico wrappers, hideously colored, soiled and torn, beneath which showed her bare, dust-stained feet.

She had thrown herself upon her knees, as the part required; her outstretched hands were intertwined beseechingly, and her wonderful eyes were raised to Grantley's face. In them was the hurt, fearful look of a faithful but abused dog in the presence of a cruel master.

Her tattered sleeves revealed numerous bruises on her perfectly formed arms.

The part of the play which Grantley had ordered her to render was that in which the heroine pleaded with her angry lover for his forgiveness of some past act of hers, which she had bitterly repented.

She was reciting the powerful lines now. They had always held her great audiences breathless, but how different was this pitiable travesty!

It would have been hard enough at best for her to make them ring true when delivered before such unsympathetic listeners and in such an incongruous garb, but she was not at her best. On the contrary, her performance was infinitely worse than any one would have supposed possible.

She had unconsciously adopted every one of the hypnotist's brutal suggestions.

There was not a vestige of her famous grace in any of her movements. The most ungainly slattern could not have been more awkward.

Her words were spoken parrotlike, as if learned by rote, without the slightest understanding of their meaning. For the most part, they succeeded one another without any attempt at emphasis, and when emphasis was used, it was invariably in the wrong place.

It was her voice itself, however, which gave Nick and Chick their greatest shock.

The Lund, as she was generally called in Europe, had always been celebrated for her remarkably musical voice; but this sorry-looking creature's voice was alternately shrill and harsh. It pierced and rasped and set the teeth on edge, just as the sound of a file does.

Nothing could have given a more sickening sense of Grantley's power over the actress than this astounding transformation, this slavish adherence to the conditions of abject failure which he had imposed upon her.

It seemed incredible, and yet, there it was, plainly revealed to sight and hearing alike.

A subtler or more uncanny revenge has probably never been conceived by the mind of man. The public breakdown which Grantley had so mercilessly caused had only been the beginning of his scheme of vengeance.

He doubtless meant to hypnotize his victim again and again, and each time to impose his will upon her gradually weakening mind, until she had become a mere wreck of her former self, and incapable of ever again taking her former place in the ranks of genius.

There was nothing impossible about it. On the contrary, the result was a foregone conclusion if Grantley were left free to continue as he had begun.

The very emotional susceptibility which had made Helga Lund a great actress had also made her an easy victim of hypnotic suggestion, and if the process went on long enough, she would permanently lose everything that had made her successful.

Outright murder would have been innocent by comparison with such infernal ingenuity of torture. It seemed to Nick as if he were watching the destruction of a splendid priceless work of art.

He had seen enough.

He withdrew the little periscope from the keyhole and straightened up. One hand went to his pocket and came out with an automatic. Chick followed his example.

They were outnumbered two to one, but that did not deter them.

Helga must be rescued at once, and her tormentors caught red-handed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SWING OF THE PENDULUM.

What was to be done, though?

To burst into the room and seek to overpower the four doctors then and there, in Helga's presence, would place the actress in additional danger.

Nick was convinced, however, that that risk would have to be run. He had seen evidences that more than one of the men were tiring of the cruel sport, and it might now come to an end at any moment.

He swiftly considered two or three possible plans for drawing the four away from their victim, but rejected them all. They would only increase the danger of a slip of some sort, and he was bent upon capturing the four, as well as releasing the actress.

Furthermore, he did not believe that even Grantley would dare to harm Helga further in his presence, even if the fortunes of war should give the surgeon a momentary opportunity.

He, accordingly, motioned to his assistant to follow close behind him, and laid his left hand on the knob.

He turned it noiselessly, and was greatly relieved to find that the door yielded. Their advent would be a complete surprise, therefore, and would find the four totally unprepared.

Nick paused a moment, then flung the door back violently and strode into the room.

Grantley was the ringleader, the most dangerous of the lot at any time, and the fact that he was an escaped convict would render his resistance more than ordinarily desperate. The periscope had told Nick where the fugitive stood, and thus the detective was enabled to cover him at once with the unwavering muzzle of the automatic.

"Hands up, Grantley! Hands up, everybody!" cried Nick, stepping a little to one side to allow Chick to enter.

His assistant took immediate advantage of the opening and stepped to his chief's side, with leveled weapon. Chick's automatic was pointed at Doctor Chester, however. After Grantley, the man whose house had been invaded, was naturally the one who was likely to put up the hardest fight.

The guilty four were spellbound with astonishment and fear for a moment, then the three younger ones jumped to their feet like so many jacks-in-the-box. Grantley had already been standing when the detectives broke in.

"Did you hear me, gentlemen?" Nick demanded, crooking his finger a little more closely about the trigger. "I said 'Hands up!' and it won't be healthy for any of you to ignore the invitation. One—two—three!"

Before the last word passed his lips, however, four pairs of hands were in the air. Doctor Willard's had gone up first, and Grantley's last.

"Thank you so much!" the detective remarked, with mock politeness. "Now, if you will oblige me a little further, by lining up against that right wall, I shall be still more

grateful to you. Kindly place yourselves about two feet apart, not less. I want you, Number Sixty Thousand One Thirteen"—Grantley winced at his prison number—"at this end of the line, next to me, with Chester, alias Schofield, next; Graves next to him, and Willard last. You see, I haven't forgotten any of my old friends."

This disposition of the trapped quartet was designed to serve two purposes. In the first place, it would remove them from proximity to Helga Lund, who, crouched in the middle of the floor, was watching the detectives with bewildered, uncomprehending eyes. In the second place, it would enable Chick to handcuff them one by one, while Nick stood ready to fire, at an instant's notice, on any one who made a false move.

It looked, for the time being, as if the capture would be altogether too easy to have any spice in it, but the detectives did not make the mistake of underrating their adversaries—Grantley, especially.

To be sure, they were probably unarmed, and had been taken at such a disadvantage that they would hardly have had an opportunity to draw weapons, even if they had worn them. Still, any one of a number of things might hapen.

The four doctors had been caught "with the goods," as the police saying is, and they might be expected to take desperate chances as soon as they had had time to collect their scattered wits and to realize the seriousness of their plight.

Nick Carter had shown his usual generalship in the orders he had given so crisply.

Grantley himself, the most to be feared of the lot, was to be placed nearest to the detective, where Nick could watch him most narrowly. That was not all, however. The detective meant that Chick should handcuff Grantley first, and thus put the leader out of mischief at the earliest opportunity.

After him, Chester was to be disposed of, and the two that would then remain were comparatively harmless in themselves.

Grantley doubtless saw through Nick's tactics from the beginning, and if the detective could have caught the gleam behind the wily surgeon's half-closed lids, he would have known that Grantley thought he saw an opportunity to circumvent those tactics.

With reasonable promptness, hands still in the air, Grantley started to obey the detective's order. He moved slowly, grudgingly, his face distorted with rage and hate.

Chester started to follow the older man toward the wall, but Chick halted him.

"Hold up, there, Schofield-Chester!" the young detective ordered. "One at a time, if you don't mind!"

He wished to prevent the confusion that would result from the simultaneous movement of the four scoundrels.

Chester paused with a snarl, and Grantley went on alone. He was making for the corner nearest to Nick, who still stood close to the door. In doing so, he was obliged to pass in front of the detective.

It had been no part of Nick's plan to have the fugitive take to that corner, and he suddenly realized that the criminal was crossing a little too close to him for safety.

"Here, keep to the left a little——" he began sharply, when Grantley was about four feet away.

But before he could complete his sentence, the escaped convict ducked and threw his body sidewise, the long arms were already above his head and he left them where they were. Their abnormal length helped to bridge the distance between him and Nick as he flung himself at the detective.

Nick guessed the nature of the move, as if by instinct, and when he fired, which he did immediately, it was with depressed muzzle. He had allowed, in other words, for the swift descent of Grantley's body.

In spite of that, however, the bullet merely plowed a furrow across the criminal's shoulder and back, as he dropped. It did not disable him in the least, and, before Nick could fire again, Grantley's peculiar dive ended with a vicious impact against his legs, and clawlike hands gripped him about the knees in an effort to pull him down.

The convict's daring act broke the spell which had held his companions. Without waiting to see whether Grantley's move was to prove successful or not, the three of them threw themselves bodily upon Chick, while the latter's attention was diverted for a moment by his chief's peril.

Doctor Chester, who had been looking for something of the sort from Grantley, was the first to pounce upon Nick's assistant. He gripped Chick's right wrist and began to twist it in an attempt to loosen the hold on the weapon.

"Help Grantley, Willard," he directed, at the same time, between his clenched teeth. "Graves and I can handle this fellow, I guess."

Willard started for Nick, while Graves shifted his attack, and, edging around behind Chick, seized him by the shoulders. At the same moment he placed one knee in the small of the young detective's back.

There could be only one result.

Chick was bent painfully back until his spine felt as if it was about to crack in two; then, in his efforts to relieve the strain, he lost his footing and went down, with Chester on top of him, and still clinging doggedly to his wrists.

A few feet away Nick was being hard pressed by two other rascals.

The pendulum of chance had swung the other way, and things looked very dubious for the detectives—and for what was left of Helga Lund!

CHAPTER X.

A HUMAN WHEEL.

Chick had thrown himself to one side to ease the pressure on his back. Accordingly, he struck the floor on his left side.

Chester and Graves dropped heavily upon him before he had more than touched the boards, the former at his feet, the latter on his shoulders.

Their bony knees crushed him down, and Graves used his weight to try to pull Chick over on his back.

Nick's assistant had twisted his left wrist out of Chester's grasp as he fell, but the renegade physician had clung for dear life to the hand which held the automatic.

Chick allowed himself to be pulled over on his back—for a very good reason. His free arm had been under him as he lay on his side, and he wanted an opportunity to use it.

Graves grabbed at it at once, but Chick stretched it—all but the upper arm—out of his antagonist's reach.

Graves would have to lean far over Chick in order to reach the latter's left wrist, and, in so doing, he would expose himself not a little. Or else he would be obliged to edge around on his knees, behind Chick's head.

He chose to try the latter maneuver, but Chick feinted with his left arm. Graves dodged, and Chick's hand darted in behind the other's guard, grasping Graves firmly by the hair.

Almost at the same instant the young detective jerked his right foot loose and gave the startled Chester a tremendous kick in the stomach.

The master of the house gave a grunt and doubled up, like a jackknife. His grip on Chick's right wrist relaxed simultaneously, and its owner tore it away.

Chester had involuntarily lurched forward, and the act had brought his head well within the reach of Chick's right hand, which was now once more at liberty.

While Nick's assistant held the struggling Graves at arm's length by the hair, with one hand, he brought down the butt of the automatic, with all the strength he could bring to bear, on Chester's lowered poll.

He had juggled the weapon in a twinkling, so that it was clubbed when it descended. The blow was surprisingly effective, considering the circumstances.

Chester groaned and toppled forward, over Chick's legs.

The detective's assistant was ready to follow up his advantage at once. He wriggled about until he was facing Graves, and then he began pulling that individual toward him by the hair.

Tears of pain were in Graves' eyes, and he struck out blindly in a desperate effort to break Chick's relentless hold. The attempt was a failure, however. Despite all of Graves' struggles, he was irresistibly drawn nearer and nearer. The fact that he wore his hair rather long helped Chick to maintain his grip.

Presently the young physician's head was near enough to allow Chick to strike it with his clubbed weapon. He drew the latter back for the blow, but his enemy, seeing what was coming, suddenly changed his tactics.

Instead of trying to pull away any more, he ducked and threw himself into Chick's arms.

The revolver butt naturally missed its mark and, for a time, they fought at too close quarters to permit such a blow to be tried again.

Graves had seized Chick around the body as he closed in, and he drew himself close, burying his head on Chick's chest. Chick still maintained his hold of his opponent's hair, however, and now retaliated by rolling over on Graves, working his feet from under the unconscious Chester as he did so.

Graves snuggled as close as he could to avoid the dreaded blow, but Chick, now being on top, was able to hold Graves' head on the floor by main force, while he arched his own powerful back and began to tear his body from his antagonist's straining arms.

Graves was game; there was no doubt about that. The pulling of his hair must have been torture to him, but he did not relinquish his hold about Chick's waist.

His eyes were closed, his face drawn and twisted with pain, but he clung obstinately, and without a whimper.

Slowly but surely, nevertheless, Chick raised himself, and the space between their laboring breasts widened. Graves' hold was being loosened bit by bit, but it had not broken.

As a matter of fact, Chick did not wait for it to break. It was not necessary, for one thing; and for another, he realized that it would be a kindness to Graves to end the painful struggle as soon as possible.

Accordingly, as soon as he had raised himself enough to deliver a reasonably effective blow with the clubbed automatic, he struck downward, with carefully controlled aim and strength.

The butt of the little weapon landed in the middle of the physician's forehead. A gasp followed, and the tugging arms fell away.

Chick had floored his two opponents.

He got quickly to his feet and looked to see if Nick needed him. Chester and Graves ought to be handcuffed before they had time to revive, but that could wait a little if necessary.

It was well that Chick finished his business just when he did, for Nick was in trouble.

Doctor Grantley was not an athlete, and his long, lanky build gave little promise of success against Nick Carter's trained muscles and varied experience in physical encounters of all sorts.

On the other hand, the convict was possessed of amazing wiriness and endurance, and, although he was not cut out for a fighting man, his keen, quick mind made up for most of his bodily deficiencies.

His original attack, for instance, was an example of unconventional but startlingly successful strategy. On the surface, it would have seemed that such a man, without weapons, had precious little chance of gaining any advantage over Nick Carter, armed as the latter was, and a good four feet away.

But Grantley followed up his impetuous dive in a most surprising way. His long arms closed about Nick's legs, but, instead of endeavoring to pull the detective down in the ordinary way, Grantley unexpectedly plucked his legs apart with all his strength.

The detective's balance instantly became a very uncertain quantity, for the surgeon's abnormally long, gorilla-like arms tore his legs apart and pushed them to right and left with astonishing ease.

Nick felt like an involuntary Colossus of Rhodes as he was forced to straddle farther and farther. He threw one hand behind him to brace himself against the wall, reversed his automatic and leaned forward, bent upon knocking the enterprising Grantley in the head.

The fugitive had other plans, however. Just as Nick bent forward, Grantley suddenly thrust his head and shoulders between the detective's outstretched limbs, and heaved upward and backward.

The detective was lifted from his feet and pitched forward, head downward. His discomfiture was a decided shock to him, but he neither lost his presence of mind nor his grip on his weapon.

Had he struck on his head and shoulders, as Grantley evidently intended he should, the result might have been exceedingly disastrous. The detective would almost certainly have been plunged into unconsciousness, and his neck might easily have been broken.

Nick saw his danger in a flash, though, drew his head and shoulders sharply inward and downward, and at the same time grasped one of Grantley's thighs with his left hand.

The result would have been ludicrous under almost any other circumstances. The detective's lowered head went, in turn, between Grantley's legs, and their intertwined

bodies formed a wheel, such as trained athletes sometimes contrive.

This countermove of Nick's was as much of a surprise to the surgeon as the latter's curious mode of attack had been to the detective.

They rolled over and over a couple of times, until Nick, finding himself momentarily on top, brought them to a stop. So awkward were their positions that neither was able to strike an effective blow at the other.

Nick had the upper hand temporarily, however, and proceeded to wrench himself loose. He had been busily engaged in this when Willard had rushed to Grantley's assistance.

That put still another face on the situation at once.

CHAPTER XI.

NICK'S EXTREMITY.

The newcomer saw his opportunity and snatched up a chair as he rushed toward the tangled combatants.

Nick heard him coming, but did not have time to extricate himself from Grantley's dogged grasp.

He raised his weapon, though, and was about to fire at Willard, when he saw that the latter was directly between him and Helga Lund. Under the circumstances, the detective did not dare to fire for fear of hitting the actress.

He kept Grantley down as best he could with his left hand, and waited for Willard with his right hand still extended, holding the automatic.

He might have an opportunity to fire, but, if not, he could at least partially ward off the expected blow from the chair.

Just as Willard paused and swung the chair aloft, Grantley managed partially to dislodge the detective, with the result that Nick was obliged to lower his right arm quickly. Otherwise he would undoubtedly have lost his balance completely, and the surgeon-convict would have had the upper hand in another second or two.

This involuntary lowering of Nick's guard served the purpose that Grantley had intended. Willard's cumbersome weapon descended with uninterrupted force on the detective's shoulders and the back of his head.

Nick lowered the latter instinctively, and thus saved himself the worst of the blow. Nevertheless, the impact of the chair was stunning in its force.

The detective felt his senses reeling, but he somehow managed to retain them and to grasp the chair, which he blindly wrenched from Willard's grasp.

As he did so, however, Grantley succeeded in throwing him off and scrambling to his feet. Nick followed his example almost simultaneously, dropped his revolver into his pocket—for fear it would fall into the hands of one of his enemies—and, grasping the heavy chair with both hands, whirled it about his head.

His two antagonists dodged it hurriedly, thus clearing a space about him. Their blood was up, however—especially Grantley's—and they felt sure that the detective had by no means recovered from the blow.

"Catch the chair, Willard!" cried Grantley.

The younger physician obeyed instantly, grasping the round of the chair with both hands, and thus preventing Nick from using it to any advantage.

The detective shoved it forward into the pit of Willard's stomach, but the newcomer managed to retain his hold. He guessed that Grantley merely meant him to keep Nick busy in front, in order to allow of a rear attack; and such was the case.

While the detective was occupied with Willard, Grantley stole behind him and plunged his hand into Nick's pocket, in search of the automatic.

The detective was obliged to let go of the chair and clamp his hand on Grantley's wrist. He was still feeling very groggy as a result of the punishment he had recently received, and a thrill of apprehension went through him.

Grantley's hand was already deep in his pocket, grasping the butt of the weapon; and there was nothing about the wrist hold to prevent the criminal from turning the muzzle of the automatic toward his side and pulling the trigger.

Incidentally, Nick foresaw that he could not hope to hold the chair with one hand. Willard would twist it away and turn it upon him.

He was right. That was precisely what Willard did. Nick let go just in time to escape a sprained, if not broken wrist, and dodged back.

In order to keep his hand in Nick's pocket, Grantley was then obliged to circle about, between the detective and Willard. That saved Nick from the latter for the moment, and, simultaneously, the detective shifted his hold from Grantley's wrist to his hand, pressing his thumb in under the latter in such a way that it prevented the hammer of the automatic from descending.

He was just in time, for Grantley pulled the trigger almost at the same moment. Thanks to Nick's foresight, however, the weapon did not go off.

Grantley cursed under his breath, but he had not emptied his bag of tricks. He suddenly drove his head and shoulders in between Nick's right arm and side, and threw his own left arm around, with a back-hand movement, in front of the detective's body.

The move threw the detective backward, over Grantley's knee, which was ready for him. At the same time, the criminal, whose right hand had remained on the weapon in Nick's pocket, began to draw the automatic out and to the rear.

In other words, he was forcing the detective in one direction with the left arm and working the revolver in the other with his right. It was manifestly impossible for Nick to stand the two opposing pressures for long.

Either he must break the hold of Grantley's left arm, which pressed across his chest like an iron band, or else he must let go of the weapon.

The former seemed out of the question in that position; and to relinquish his hold on the revolver meant a shot in the side, which, with Grantley's knowledge of anatomy, would almost certainly prove fatal.

Backward went Nick's straining right arm, inward turned the hard muzzle of the weapon. Grantley was twisting the automatic now, hoping to loosen the detective's grasp all the quicker.

Something was due in a few moments, and it promised to be a tragedy for the detective.

Then, to cap the climax, Willard circled about the two combatants, like a hawk ready to swoop down on its prey, and, seeing Nick's head protruding from under Grantley's left arm, hauled off and let drive with the chair.

The surgeon received part of the blow, but Nick's head stopped enough of it to end the strange tussle.

The detective crumpled up, but Grantley held him from the floor and wrested the weapon from the nerveless fingers. He withdrew it from Nick's pocket and put it to the detective's left breast, determined to end it all, without fail.

It was at that supreme moment that Chick charged up and took a hand.

Nick's assistant reached Willard first. The latter's back was toward him, and he was just in the act of drawing back the chair. Chick's clubbed weapon descended on his head without warning, and Willard pitched forward on his face.

It was not until then that Chick saw the automatic at his chief's breast. There was no time to reach Grantley—not a second to waste.

The young detective did what Nick and his men seldom allowed themselves to do—he turned his automatic around again and shot to kill.

Nick's own life depended upon it, and there was nothing else to do.

The bullet struck Grantley full between the eyes, and the escaped convict dropped without a sound.

The battle was over and won.

* * * * * * *

Doctor Hiram A. Grantley—so called—master surgeon and monster of crime, would never return to Sing Sing to serve out his unexpired term; but neither would he trouble the world, or Helga Lund, again.

If the truth were known, it would doubtless be found that Warden Kennedy heaved a sigh of profound relief when he heard of Grantley's death. It left no room for anxiety over the possibility of another hypnotic escape.

Doctors Chester, Willard, and Graves were speedily brought to trial, and they were convicted of aiding and abetting the deceased Grantley in an illegal experiment in hypnotism on the person of the great Swedish actress.

As for Helga Lund, she was a nervous wreck for nearly a year, but gradually, under the care of the best European physicians, she recovered her health and her confidence in herself.

She has now returned to the stage, and Nick Carter, who has seen her recently in Paris, declares that she is more wonderful than ever.

He wishes he could have spared her that last humiliating ordeal, but she is wise enough to know that, but for him and Chick, the man she had despised would have made his dreadful vengeance complete.

THE END.

"The Call of Death; or, Nick Carter's Clever Assistant," is the title of the story that you will find in the next issue of this weekly, No. 121, out January 2d. This story is the first of three, that will deal with a most remarkable criminal and his associates in crime.

THE LARGEST LEAVES.

The palms are said to be the plants possessing the largest leaves. The Quaja palm of the Amazons has leaves approaching fifty feet in length by sixteen feet in breadth. The leaves of some palms in Ceylon are more than eighteen feet long, and nearly as wide, and are used by the natives for making tents. The cocoa palm has leaves nearly thirty feet long. In other families than the palms, the parasol magnolia of Ceylon forms leaves large enough to shelter fifteen or twenty persons. One of the leaves, taken to England, as a specimen, measured nearly thirty-five feet. The largest leaves grown in temperate climates are those of the exotic Victoria regia, which sometimes reach about seven feet in diameter.

The Riddle and the Ring.

By GORDON MacLAREN.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 113 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XLIII.

HIS SECOND HALF.

The rattle of the window shade and the tramping of a number of feet on the stairs brought Barry to himself with a start just as the unknown put his finger to his lips and stepped noiselessly back into the shadow.

"Face round, but stand where you are," breathed the unknown.

Lawrence obeyed instinctively, and the next instant the hall door opened to admit several men. The first was well on in years, with a tall, splendid figure and a noble, distinguished face. He seemed in the grip of some great, though partially suppressed, emotion; and, as he caught sight of Barry, he sprang hastily toward him, both hands outstretched.

"Oscar!" he cried, in a deep, vibrating voice which held a distinctly foreign intonation. "My dear boy! I——"

The words died in a queer gurgling sound. One of the men by the door cried out sharply; another drew his breath through his teeth with an odd, whistling noise. Then silence—tense, vibrating silence—fell upon the room as out of the shadows appeared the other man and moved noiselessly forward to Barry's side.

He did not speak or stir after he had taken up his position there. The two men, so absolutely, unbelievably alike, stood shoulder to shoulder, motionless as statues, while the seconds ticked away and those who witnessed the amazing spectacle stared and stared with dazed faces, unable to credit the evidence of their senses.

Once only did Barry's gaze waver from the stunned countenance of the older man to the other end of the room, where Shirley Rives stood bending far over the table, her face absolutely white, and her wide, dark eyes staring at him as if she were looking at a ghost.

At last a laugh, clear, hearty, and full of mirth, came from the man at his side, and broke the spell.

"Rather good, don't you think, uncle?" the newcomer chuckled, stepping forward a little.

"*Gott in Himmel!*" breathed the older man. "You are——"

"Of course. Don't you know me? I never supposed that *you* would be deceived."

With a swift motion, the other caught his hands and drew him over to the light.

"Let me look at you!" he exclaimed, speaking German in his agitation. "I cannot tell! I do not know! I feel as if the whole world had been turned topsy-turvy."

For a long minute he gazed searchingly into the young

man's face, while the others moved unconsciously closer to the two, Barry quite as dazed and bewildered as any of them. Suddenly he threw back his gray head and flung one arm impulsively around the young fellow's shoulder.

"You *are* Oscar!" he exclaimed. "I know it!"

For a second he was silent. Then he turned swiftly toward the group of men who had entered with him, and singled out one with his flashing eyes.

"What does this mean, Baron Hager?" he demanded imperiously. "How dare you play such a trick upon me? It is infamous!"

It was the man with the beard who stepped forward; and Barry saw that he was trembling in every limb, while beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead.

"Your highness!" he gasped. "I—I—— It is not a trick. I—have never seen—this man before."

"Never seen him! Nonsense! I'm not a child. How did he get here? What is he doing in this house? Who is he?"

Hager stared helplessly at Lawrence, and then his bewildered eyes wandered dazedly to the smiling double. His emotion was so great, however, that he did not speak, and it was Brennen who answered.

"I can tell you that," he said shortly. "He's the man we've been trailing all over New York, thinking he was your nephew. He's the man we decoyed here to-night for you to meet. If he ain't the right one, we're a lot of suckers, that's all."

"He's my second half, uncle," interposed the young man, smiling. "It isn't everybody who can have such a good one, you know."

"Is that the truth, Oscar?" demanded the older man. "Has he been passing himself off for you all this time?"

"Exactly, and he did it wonderfully well, too. I owe him an everlasting debt——"

The sentence was never finished. As he stood there, unable to make head or tail of what was being said, Barry had a horrible conviction that somehow his curiosity was never going to be gratified. He had come as close as this several times before to learning the name of the man he so resembled, and he was determined to take no more chances.

"My dear fellow," he burst out, unable longer to contain himself, "if you owe me anything at all, for Heaven's sake pay me now by telling me who on earth you are."

"You mean to say you do not know!" exclaimed the older man incredulously. "Why, such a thing is preposterous."

The laughter vanished suddenly from the nephew's face, and, stepping swiftly forward, he caught Barry's hand in a firm grip.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Lawrence," he said contritely. "I've been fearfully discourteous. Please forgive me, and do not think me ungrateful for what you have done. I am Prince Oscar, of Ostrau, and this is my uncle, the Grand Duke Frederick."

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE RIDDLE SOLVED.

In the brief silence which followed there came to Barry's ears the sound of a quick gasp, followed by a strangled sob, from the girl at the table. And in that second, as he stood holding his own hand, as it were, and gazing into his own eyes, he realized with a rush of joy that this was what had troubled Shirley. They had told her that he was the crown prince of an Old World kingdom, and it was small wonder she had been dismayed.

"I am more than happy at meeting your highness at last," he went on the next instant, gazing into the pleasant face of the young foreigner. Then his lips twitched and curved into an involuntary smile. "It seems as if I had known you all my life instead of a scant ten minutes."

The prince laughed delightedly. From the very beginning he had apparently enjoyed the situation to the full, and there was a total lack of royal dignity and stiffness about him which was refreshing.

"It's the greatest lark I ever had," he chuckled. "Haven't you begun to see the fun of it yet, uncle?"

The grand duke sighed. "Are you never going to be serious?" he asked sadly. "Do you mean to go through life taking everything as a jest, content to remain an irresponsible boy always?"

The prince straightened suddenly, and there came into his handsome face an expression which was very far from boyish. His jaw squared, and he pressed his lips firmly together as he stood regarding his uncle out of clear, level, uncompromising eyes.

"It isn't any use, uncle," he said abruptly. "My mind is made up, and nothing you can say will induce me to change."

The grand duke's lips parted as if he meant to speak, but closed swiftly again, and he darted a significant glance at the man with the beard.

"Be so good as to leave us, baron," he said curtly.

Baron Hager gave a start and turned hastily toward the door, followed closely by his two compatriots and the American detectives. Brennen brought up the rear, moving with evident reluctance, as if there were numberless points about the affair he was pining to have cleared up.

"By the way, Mr. Brennen," Lawrence called after him, struck by a sudden thought, "whatever you've done to my two friends, I'd be obliged if you would undo it at once."

The detective nodded sourly and closed the door behind him. As he disappeared, Barry realized that it would be more graceful for him also to leave the room; but, when he made a move to do so, the crown prince caught him by the arm.

"Please stay," he said quietly. "Mr. Lawrence is my friend, uncle. Whatever you say before him will go no farther."

"As you will," returned the grand duke indifferently. He hesitated an instant, his eyes fixed pleadingly upon his nephew's face. "Oscar," he went on swiftly, "your father, the king, has sent me to beg of you to come home to your family, your people, your country. He wants you. He needs you. You cannot realize the nature of the step you have taken. You acted hastily—heedlessly. For the honor of the throne, Oscar, I beg of you—I beseech you—to give up your harebrained scheme and resume again the place in life to which you were born."

There was no gleam of mirth in the face of the crown prince now. It was firm and serious and a little white; his eyes were fixed unfalteringly on his uncle's face.

"And what of my wife?" he asked quietly.

A flicker of pain flashed into the grand duke's face and was gone.

"There are ways——" he began hesitatingly.

"Ways!" broke in the prince swiftly. "What ways?

You mean a morganatic marriage, I suppose. You know that is impossible, even if I would consider it. She is an American girl."

Lawrence, standing a little behind the duke, listening with an interest he made no attempt to conceal, noticed how the faint, foreign intonation—it could hardly be called an accent—in the young man's voice was intensified in a moment of excitement.

The grand duke did not answer at once, and, when finally he spoke, there was a hopeless undercurrent in his voice which showed clearly that he had little hope of his argument meeting with success.

"Under the laws of Ostrau," he said in a low tone, "a woman without royal or noble blood cannot marry into the reigning family. She, therefore, has no standing as your wife. In Ostrau the bond does not exist, and you would be free to marry your father's choice, Princess Olga, of Gratz."

The young man's lips curled and his eyes narrowed. "Never!" he exclaimed impulsively. "She's ten years too old and a thousand times impossible. Luckily," he went on more composedly, "we're in America, not Ostrau, and I propose to stay here. I'm beastly sorry, uncle, for your sake. We've always been great pals, and ever since I was a kid I've loved you more than my august father. I'd do anything else for you gladly, but this is impossible. I'll renounce my rights to the succession for myself and my heirs forever. Let Maurice be crown prince, can't you? He'll make a lot better king than I ever could. All I want is to be let alone; to be free to live my own life and be happy in my own way. Ostrau stifles me with its foolish, cramping etiquette and narrow bigotry. It's ruined your life, and I'll take precious good care——"

He broke off abruptly as the grand duke groaned and covered his face with one hand.

"Forgive me, uncle!" the prince begged. "I didn't mean to hurt you. I forgot myself. But you understand," he went on softly, "because you, too, have suffered."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE GIFT OF THE RING.

The older man did not answer at once, and Lawrence, feeling as if he had no right to listen, moved slowly backward till he touched the table. Then he turned suddenly and looked down quizzically into Shirley's eyes.

"You—understand?" he whispered gently.

She nodded swiftly. "What must you think of me?" she murmured a little unsteadily. "I didn't believe it at first, but they swore it—was true; and, somehow, things—fitted in, and—and—— Do you think you'll ever forgive me?"

One hand stole across the table, and the strong brown fingers closed over the tiny gloved ones.

"Did you really think I wouldn't?" he questioned softly, gazing into her wonderful eyes with an expression in his own which swiftly brought her long lashes sweeping down on crimsoning cheek.

"Well?" he queried as she made no answer.

"I—I hoped," she faltered.

It was the voice of the grand duke, weary, sorrowful, but full of an unmistakable resignation, which broke the silence.

"I cannot blame you, Oscar," he was saying quietly. "I have clung to the old traditions because there seemed no other way—perhaps I lacked the courage to do what you have done—and my life turned to dust and ashes. I love you too well ever to wish to see that happen to you. Have you any—plans?"

"Heaps of them, uncle," the prince answered jauntily. "I'm going to become an American citizen. I think I'll buy a big place in the South and turn farmer. I've money enough."

The two at the table saw the old man wince slightly, but in an instant he had recovered his composure.

"What a thoroughbred he is!" Barry whispered admiringly. He had apparently forgotten to release Shirley's hand, but she seemed too absorbed to notice the lapse.

"There will be no difficulty on that score," the duke remarked. "Your estates belong to you personally, and their sale should net a million or more."

Suddenly he gave a start and arose swiftly to his feet.

"I beg your pardon, Oscar," he ejaculated, in chagrin. "My preoccupation has made me forget entirely my desire to meet your—wife. This lady——"

He glanced at Shirley with a courtly inclination, just in time to see her snatch her hand from Barry's grasp and spring to her feet with blazing cheeks. The prince saw it, too, and his eyes twinkled.

"I have not the honor," he said quietly. "My wife is just recovering from an illness which has been the cause of most of these complications. Mr. Lawrence, will you be so good as to present us?"

With swiftly recovered composure, Shirley acknowledged the introduction with a naïve dignity; and, when they had all seated themselves again, the prince begged for a recital of Barry's adventures.

"Extraordinary and most diverting," he said when the tale had been told. "Perhaps a little more amusing in retrospect. My dear Mr. Lawrence, I feel more than ever indebted to you for what you have done. When I started the ball rolling last Monday morning I had no conception of the strenuous experiences I was bringing upon you. You see, I had left Ostrau secretly with only Watkins, my American secretary, who has been with me for years, but I was almost certain of being followed. I hoped, however, that we should succeed in losing ourselves somewhere in the South or West before our trail was picked up. I should explain, perhaps, that my wife and I were married in Paris, where she was spending the winter. She was Miss Isabel Patterson, of Baltimore. We sailed under assumed names; or, rather, under a name I used in England during our exile——"

"I beg your pardon," Lawrence put in, "but was it Nordstrom?"

"Why, yes. How did you know?"

"I met a friend of yours who had known you at Cambridge. He was an Englishman named Brandon."

"John Brandon!" exclaimed the prince. "Of course! We were great friends during my university days, but I haven't seen him in years. You see, Mr. Lawrence, our family was exiled from Ostrau until the timely revolution three years ago which restored my father to power. I was brought up in England, and, as we were very poor, indeed, I went through Rugby and Cambridge under the name of Nordstrom, which is one of our family names. It would have been absurd for a poverty-stricken individual to be strutting about as a prince. What times we had!" he sighed. "I think they were the happiest days of my life—until now. But I am digressing. Unfortunately

for our plans, my wife was taken ill just as we were on the point of leaving New York. I knew that the pursuit would be keen, and, unless attention was diverted from us to another quarter, we would be hunted out no matter how carefully we hid ourselves in New York. Considering my wife's health, I was most anxious to avoid anything of that sort until she was recovered.

"I was at my wit's end," he continued, "and could think of nothing until one day, while waiting with Watkins in the Pennsylvania Station for a physician from Philadelphia, whom I knew well, and who had promised to come on, I suddenly caught sight of you. I was simply stumped, of course; then, like a flash, I realized that here was the way out, which I had hitherto been searching for in vain. It took but a moment for me to outline a plan to Watkins, arrange my bill case, and place the ring in it. You see, that had been given me by the Rajah of Sind when I toured India two years ago, and I had scarcely had it off my finger since then. If an added mark of identification were needed, that would amply suffice.

"The plan worked to a charm. When Hager, my father's chief of police, arrived, he was completely taken in. He kept on your trail day and night, and my purpose was accomplished. We had taken rooms in what I considered the most out-of-the-way locality in New York. When I went out it was always after dark and wearing a semidisguise. In spite of every care, however, fate seemed to be against me, and caused Hager to choose this very house for the culmination of his little drama. My rooms are just back of this. Through the door I heard all that passed; and, when I found that my uncle was expected, I realized that the better way would be to end everything at once and be free from further persecution. I can only close, Mr. Lawrence, by offering my most sincere apologies for the annoyance to which you have been subjected."

"There is not the slightest need of that, your highness," Barry returned hastily. "I am more grateful to you than I can say, for without your aid I should probably have missed—the greatest happiness of my life."

"You are good to say that," the prince said simply. "I am very happy."

"Aren't you forgetting something?" Lawrence asked, as they arose.

The crown prince looked slightly puzzled. "I'm afraid I do not understand."

"This," explained Lawrence, drawing the emerald ring from his finger and holding it out. "It belongs to you, you know."

"Not at all. That is yours. It is part of the bargain, and I am sure you have earned it."

"But it's worth a king's ransom," Barry protested. "I really can't take it. You have given me more than enough without that. Besides, it is much too rare a jewel for me to be wearing."

The prince darted a mischievous glance at Shirley Rives. "Perhaps there is some one else who might be willing to relieve you of its care," he murmured, his fine eyes twinkling.

There was no mistaking his meaning, and the girl dropped her lids, while a rush of color crimsoned her lovely face. The next instant, however, she lifted them again and looked bravely into Barry's questioning eyes.

"Perhaps—some day," she murmured.

THE END.

RUBY LIGHT.

By BURKE JENKINS.

CHAPTER I.

QUICK ACTION.

At a quarter to five in the afternoon, when the thing really began as far as I myself was concerned, I happened to be swinging my legs from the stringpiece of the town dock of Port Washington. How and why I had been sitting there some two hours, in a hot, summer sun, will develop in due course. Sufficient now to state that my frame of mind was one of general disgust at the world's handling; this coupled to a dark-brown ennui.

Quite listlessly I had been running my dye over a trimlined launch of the "day-cruiser" type that was moored, bow and stern to a float below me. For the most part, I love boats far more than people; so it must have been something out of the ordinary that made me shift my attention suddenly from the craft itself to the two men who manned it.

One, a clean-limbed, undersized man of about forty, much spattered with gilt braid and buttons, I sized up as the captain. He stood on the float alongside the diminutive wheelhouse, steadying the slight roll of the craft with his left hand, while his right constantly sought his watch in nervous consultation of the exact time.

"A precise and pompous bit of a fool!" I remember grunting to myself. But my gaze happened that instant to travel toward the other.

This fellow hadn't quitted the boat, but busied himself lumbering, I thought, about the engine, which was situated in the after cockpit. A loosely knit chap he was, whose fingers were all thumbs.

And I, who fairly caress a bit of machinery, wondered how in thunder such a clumsy cuss could ever have got the position as engineer of so trim a little vessel.

But the little skipper again caught my attention, for he suddenly snapped his watch case and quickened to attention. His gaze never left the road that led to the wharf, which, by the way, was the way to the railroad station.

An auto, quick-driven and skidding slightly in the dust, rounded the turn by the shore hotel and took to the wharf's planks.

Now, how it was that my eyes whirled from this decidedly new interest back to the heavy man in the boat I don't know; but I am certainly glad now that I did glance that way on that particular second.

For, with a furtive look at his little chief, the fellow made a quick step forward and to starboard. It was but a second that his hand groped under a locker; but, when he withdrew it, his face lighted to a grin. He checked it quickly, though, as he slid back to his old position before the flywheel.

The car groaned to sharply applied brakes directly alongside the gangway that led steeply down to the float, for the tide was low.

Immediately a man popped from the limousine, and handed down a closely veiled woman; then he slipped a coin to the chauffeur, who forthwith made off.

Somehow or other, I was getting mighty interested by

this time; though, of course, none of it was any of my business.

The woman wore a dream of a little, high-heeled boot, which showed prettily enough in her terror of the sharply sloping plank. But the man steadied her firmly to the float, where he nodded curtly to the little, gilded captain.

"Well, we made it, Stevens," I heard him say.

Then he called his own bluff at being the gentleman, for he lighted a cigarette, drawing his match across a polished mahogany panel of the wheelhouse. I could see the little skipper fairly writhe. He had my sympathy; for, owner or no owner, right is right.

"New rich, and thinks he's the real thing," I muttered to myself, little realizing how soon I was to assume another rôle.

With but a moment's delay, the girl reached a seat on a transom of the midship half cabin; and, just before joining her, the man drew out a handsomely jeweled watch.

"No time to spare, eh, Stevens?" he inquired, a bit anxiously, I thought.

Stevens deftly cast off the moorings and took his position at the wheel.

"I'll get there," said he, as he jangled the bell for "ahead."

The lumbering engineer leisurely grasped the starting lever and drew her up to compression. The coil buzzed viciously, but no cough told of explosion.

His surprise was a fine imitation of the genuine as he cranked once more, but without result. The engine lay dead. Then I saw a sharp look of dismay flash across the features of the man I reckoned to be the owner.

"What's the matter?" he snapped, in a tone far removed from his former easy one.

"Don't know," grumbled the engineer surlily. "She wuz runnin' all right comin' over."

He went on with his futile cranking. Then the girl leaped to her feet with a little cry, the wind whipping aside the veil a moment. Her face decided me. If there was anything I could do to take away that look of anxiety, almost terror, I'd do it. And, furthermore, I was pretty sure I could. I knew I'd be taking a chance; but I didn't believe it was much of a one; and, besides, I like to take chances.

By the time I had reached the boat's side, Stevens had thrust aside the burly fellow, and was trying to start the balky machine himself, while the owner chafed in bitterest impatience.

I caught his eye.

"I think I can start her," I said simply.

He must have read something in my tone that conveyed more than the usual talk of the "butter-in."

"You understand engines?" he queried sharply.

"Enough to know that they need gasoline to run with," I replied; and, before even the engineer knew what I was up to, I entered the cockpit, and strode quickly over to the tank locker, where I found my guess correct. I was no longer taking any chances.

A stopcock which I had counted upon finding there was there, and turned off.

"I saw him turn it off a moment before you arrived," said I.

I know now I should have been a trifle more diplomatic, and I might well have regretted it; for the fellow had me nicely by the throat in the time you could count three.

But aid came speedily.

With a neatness and dispatch with which I would never have credited his build, the owner shot out a white-knuckled fist, and caught the engineer prettily beneath the cheek.

There's a spot that effects the result nicely.

Grip relaxed, he toppled over the rail. The next second he bobbed to the surface, gurgling stertorously.

I had regained my breath from the strangle by this time.

"Here, quick!" said I, springing for the stopcock and turning it on full. "I'll run her for you."

I had caught the glitter of a constable's star in the small crowd that had collected on the dock from nowhere. I realized that explanation would delay.

And little Skipper Stevens proved a man of quick action, too; for this time the bell jangled with a result.

I threw her over, and she caught on the first spark.

Two minutes after, we shaved the angle of the channel and headed straight for Plum Beach Point.

That engine, given fuel, certainly was a sweet-running piece of metal.

CHAPTER II.

A BIT OF ACTING.

For the next ten minutes I was too busy tuning the launch up to her best performance to pay much attention to the others, or even to realize the oddity of my position.

I refilled the grease cups, which I found had run pretty low, screwed them down to a good tension, and gave a look at the sight tubes of the automatic oiler.

Of course, the engine, new to me, was a bit of a problem. Twice she choked—not to a stop, but enough to make Stevens cast an apprehensive eye back at me. A quarter turn of the needle valve did the trick, though; and, as though she were chortling at a mischievous prank, she settled down to a steady, mile-eating gurgle.

Finally—it was just about as we were quitting the harbor for the open Sound—I found time to flop myself down upon the engineer's transom and size up the situation.

Stevens, the skipper, was no problem at all. I had him right on my thumb nail. His like are to be encountered the yacht world over. A punctilious, efficient commander of any kind of a pleasure vessel from two hundred feet to twenty overall length. No great head on him, but a perfect wonder at taking orders and obeying them. And dumb as a bivalve.

The owner bothered me far more; partly, as was natural, from the fact that I didn't get one really fair-and-square look at him. He stood squarely beside Stevens at the wheel, his watch in his palm, and his eyes never off the water ahead. This I did notice, though: his head, in the intensity of his gaze, had a trick of settling forward and down. Not a crouch, but buzzardlike and scouring.

Somehow I caught myself fancying that I'd recognize that attitude when I saw it again. Events, however, will prove that I wasn't quite as smart as I thought I was.

But it was as though I had been saving up for the verdict that hit me fairly between the eyes when I finally

settled covert attention upon the girl. Sudden is no name for it.

Once clear of the harbor, and with the freshing, southerly breeze whipping smartly, she flung aside the disgusting veil with a pleasure as apparent as my own at having her do it. And, eyes dancing to the delight of it all, for a bit of spray was flying, she fairly made me a comrade with the smile of a gleeful child.

Now I'm not going to waste any words as to whether such things ever really do happen or not. I'm not even going to slack up my yarn, describing the how, when, or where.

The fact remains; and it was real fact. I dug it then and there from somewhere 'way down in some inner chink of me where I'm only half awake. But I never yet was fooled from that quarter.

That little girl there on that plush-covered transom was born to be my wife.

And the funniest thing about it all was that it seemed to be the most natural thing in the world. There was an "of-courseness" to it that was fairly delicious; and the fact that she herself hadn't waked to it quite yet was immaterial.

The bell brought me back to machinery, and suddenly. I checked her to half speed, and peered ahead for the cause of it. We were just abreast Stepping Stones Light, just to north'ard of it, and with plenty of clear water ahead. I saw nothing to justify any change in speed, especially since up to this time both men had seemed most keen to get every revolution possible out of her.

I noticed, however, that they were scanning closely a column of black smoke that was slowly moving along the farther side of Throgg's Neck. Finally a long puff of white steam showed against the darker smoke, and, some seconds thereafter, the hoarse toot of a whistle told me that a steamer, whose hull was invisible beyond the land, was approaching the turn at Fort Schuyler.

Stevens and the owner whispered a moment, then the little skipper jangled the bell once more for full speed. But even then I didn't tumble to the thing. I don't believe yet that I am much to be blamed for stupidity on this score, however; for the next few minutes certainly were crowded with the unusual.

I have often since marveled at the nicety with which Stevens had calculated the relative distances. He certainly knew his book when it came to helmsmanship.

For, at the moment that the bluff bows of the steamer, rounding the point and keeping to the channel, straightened out to lay a course to Execution Rocks, then it was that Stevens edged our course sharply to port.

This, in turn, he followed by a frantic pawing of the wheel's spoke to starboard. It was some of the finest acting I had ever seen; and no one in the world would have suspected him of being other than a distinctly panic-stricken helmsman whose steering gear had suddenly gone all to pot.

And it really was dangerous. I can still see that black wall of steel plates towering above us; for he had actually had the nerve to whirl the launch within ten feet of the steamer.

In the glance I shot up to the vessel's rail, I could see the frightened eyes of several passengers; and, above them, in the farther distance of the bridge, an officer was fingering a bell pull hesitatingly.

Whether the owner saw his indecision, I don't know, but his action seemed to point to that effect; for he suddenly grabbed our whistle cord, and sent shriek after shriek in a perfect panic of nervousness. And all this time Stevens was clawing the wheel. Then suddenly he gave me "full speed astern." It was enough to wrench the gears' bearings apart; but I swung her to it. And we groaned and churned astern.

Then it was that the officer on the bridge did signal his engine room, and he sang out in clear bass:

"What's the trouble? Can't you work clear of me?"

I could well understand the disgust that was only slightly veiled; for yachtsmen certainly are a nuisance to the professional seaman, especially the new-fledged power boatmen.

But it was an imperative tone that met him.

"The steering gear's clean gone!" bellowed Stevens, in a volume I could never have credited to his diminutive frame. "Drop us a ladder."

And, without so much as a hint of hesitancy, the little fellow shoved a boat hook back at me with the word to keep by the steamer, which had not yet quite lost her way.

I believe it was really because he caught sight of the girl, who was naturally terrified. Anyway, the officer shot out a sharp order, and next instant the coils and rungs of a rope boarding ladder came swaying down to us.

"Come on, Stella," chuckled the owner, taking her arm and trying hard to repress his gleeful satisfaction at the way things were going. "Keep a stiff upper lip, girl, and hold tight. There's really no danger, and you are as spry as a monkey. Up you go!"

And up she did go with an agility and grace that only a man who knows a rope ladder could appreciate.

The owner followed her immediately; and, the instant he was fairly on his way to the deck of the steamer above us, I got my next surprise.

"Shove off!" snapped Stevens, in a sharp whisper to me.

Almost mechanically I did so; for I was in that particular daze of unreality we are all familiar with.

"Full speed ahead!" came the next quick command; and I threw the gear from the "neutral." The cogs caught nicely, and we gathered instant motion.

And in less than a minute thereafter we were speeding away, the steering gear working like new.

In my day I have known more conventional ways of taking passage to Portland, Maine.

For I read the steamer's name on the stern. I had sailed on her once myself.

CHAPTER III.

BY CHANCE.

Not one word could I get out of that tight-mouthed little cuss, Stevens. He didn't even deign to look my way till we had rounded the couple of points, and he was approaching the float of a hotel dock that ran alongside the ferry slip at College Point.

But what he did say then was rather complimentary, and I liked the smack of it. We had come alongside the float; and both of us, at his nod, had quitted the launch; and he stood there steadying her with his left hand.

"Well," said he heartily, as he stuck out his right for a shake, "you're a good man at obeying orders."

I felt something crumple in my fist as I withdrew it.

A crisp twenty it proved to be, and I realized that I had served my purpose.

"That yellow boy was pretty easy earned; eh, lad?" said he, with a chuckle. "And with a little excitement thrown in, eh? But a closed mouth spills no mush. So I guess I'll run her back myself."

And blow me if the little, old rascal didn't pop right into the craft, start her with the skill of an old hand at the game; and, steering with the side lever with which the boat was fitted, he sped away, directly retracing the course we had just covered.

I strolled shoreward along the wharf toward the hotel porch, where I sat myself at one of the tables and ordered a steak. And, while it was cooking, I tried to dope out a little of the mystery.

Fifteen minutes of hard concentration brought me but one point; and that point, as I have already said, had already flashed to me on an intuitional second. I mean about the girl. Beyond my sudden love for her, nothing showed up to me at all. I simply couldn't make head or tail to a thing that had transpired since I had been sitting with my grouch back there on the town dock at Port Washington.

And now, perhaps, it's the best time to explain the reason for the grouch, and let out how I happened to be there at all.

Briefly stated, I had been discharged the day before. Fired, canned—call it what you will; and for what I now recognize to have been an entirely good and sufficient reason.

But in the hot-headed asininity which I had not the sense to master in those days, I had flared up to the quiet, but firm, remonstrance of my chief. It had been a case in which I had exceeded my orders, and I thought he ought rather to have applauded my zeal.

So that, in that blurting, blubbering fashion of the man who can't keep his temper, I had let out a string of heated nonsense.

Whereupon Chief Garth's tone had raised not a whit.

"Well, Grey," said he slowly—too slowly, "I'm sorry, though I was afraid it would have to come. I had hoped it wouldn't; but I simply cannot brook such repeated displays of inability to control your temper. I might waive the personal note; but I must not lose sight of the fact that such a trait, unmastered, makes you less a man to be relied upon."

I started to interrupt him, but a gesture checked me.

"You remember," said he, holding his same evenness, "that I told you the very first day you entered the detective service that orders were orders, and that I was distinctly a martinet. Now, I like you, and I'm not chary of admitting that you're a very valuable man to me in many ways. But——"

And here I had been fool enough to whirl into my usual, youthful burst of independence. As I look back upon the scene, the chief was too moderate; though I did flounce from his office finally, with my pay to date and walking papers.

But now—what a change one look into certain eyes can make—I sat there on that hotel porch and realized what an ass I was. And, by the way, such a realization proved most salutary.

For, next instant, I made up my mind to eat "humble pie." I wouldn't waste a minute in finding the chief. I would make a straightforward apology and ask him to reinstate me.

Of course, it was long past office hours, but I decided not to let my resolution cool.

I knew where Chief Garth lived, and could count pretty well upon his being at home; for that little wife of his held him snug enough by her whenever he wasn't personally engaged on an important case.

So I bolted my meal, and caught the ferryboat which landed at East Ninety-ninth Street. I even took a taxi to his house, so firmly did my new resolution grip me.

Finally we whirled the last corner, and brought up sharp before Chief Garth's house, which was brilliantly enough indicated by a Welsbach light in the vestibule.

It showed the number plainly, and, just as I stepped from the cab and paid my fare, it showed more. For, at this moment, the door opened. I heard a word or two exchanged; then the door closed, and a man came down the stoop as hurriedly as a slight limp would let him.

He passed close by me as I was about to mount the steps, and I experienced that uncomfortable sensation of having seen him some time, but no more. Such a haunting inability to spot my man is one of my worst points as a detective.

"Anyway," thought I, "whoever he is, he's in about as bad a temper as I've ever seen 'em."

With that I rang, and was admitted by a negress. It wasn't another minute before I was ushered into the chief's den.

He was pacing up and down, puffing violently at a fat cigar. From his first word, I knew him well enough to know that he was anything but displeased at my showing up.

"Well, Grey," he grumbled, "what's the lay now?"

Five hours before I would have snapped back a sharp retort and seen him to the deuce, but things glowed different now.

"Why, chief," I replied, with a laugh, "I just came back because I think you'll want me now. You see, I've sworn off—losing my temper."

He stopped short before me and shot me a glance.

"You mean it?" said he. "Because if you do," he went on, "I believe you. The one thing that has always struck me about your past offenses is—that you never have promised to do better in the future. And, strange as it may seem," he chuckled, "that's the very reason I put up with you so long."

"Well, I mean it now," said I simply.

My tone must have carried complete conviction, for his manner abruptly changed.

"Sit down," said he suddenly, and we faced each other over his broad, flat-top desk. "It just happens at this moment that I do need you, Grey; and need you pretty bad, too; for I've just been put in line with a thing that already got beyond Pawlinson, of Washington."

"Yes?" said I, catching fire at the interest.

"The affair was important enough to warrant Pawlinson taking the trail himself; and it certainly has led him a pretty dance during the two days he's been at it."

I had never met Pawlinson personally, but his position among us was the byword of efficiency. I glowed to the compliment the chief was indirectly paying me.

"What's the exact nature of the case?" said I.

"That's just it," muttered Garth disgustedly. "What we've got to go on is the slimmest ever. Pawlinson's so

cursed secretive that he hasn't even let out what the fellow's wanted for.

"Fact is, Pawlinson was here; just this moment gone. You must have passed him coming in. But for all he's been pretty definitely shaken off the trail, he won't let out but this much:

"A man answering this description"—here the chief tossed me the usual paper of height, color of hair, et cetera—"arrived off quarantine aboard the *Benzobia* yesterday at daylight. Pawlinson had one of his men waiting for him when the vessel docked; but in some outlandish way the chap managed to get the skipper to let him go over the side and into a gasoline launch that hove alongside while they were slowing down just abreast of Liberty.

"Now Pawlinson gets kind of hazy as to just what happened directly after that," continued the chief; "nor does he give me any particulars as to how he ever managed to get a berth as engineer of the little launch. But how he lost the job he told me fully enough; and he sprinkled the narrative with plenty of cuss words. It seems that while the launch was waiting for the fellow at the town dock of Port Washington, Long Island, that——"

"Port Washington!" I cried sharply.

"Why, yes—know the place?" He, of course, couldn't understand my excitement.

"And do you mean to tell me that it was Pawlinson himself whom I saw that fellow shoot so prettily over the rail with a punch that would do your heart good?" Things were fitting together for me now. But they certainly were not for the chief.

"What the deuce are you talking about, anyway?" he said. "I hadn't told you about that yet."

"I know, I know," I jumbled on; "but what does Pawlinson say of the girl? What had she to do with the thing, anyway?"

"The girl? For Heaven's sake, Grey, how much do you know about this thing?"

But he got little satisfaction from me then, for a sudden realization swept over me.

I caught up the paper describing the man who was wanted, and crowded it into my pocket.

"Explain later, chief," I blurted, making for the door. "I'll wire you the minute I've got him located. Meanwhile wire me money when I call for it, will you?"

"Aye, aye, boy!" agreed the chief, understanding thoroughly that even his curiosity must wait. He was a big enough man to know when to play second fiddle.

So I caught the midnight train to Boston which connected with the Portland express.

CHAPTER IV.

TWO PANETELAS.

Upon quitting Chief Garth's door and trotting down his stoop, I walked briskly westward in the direction of a square which I counted upon getting another cab; for, expecting no further use of him, I had dismissed my former driver. I found two cabs, both taxis, and immediately stepped toward the nearest.

"Grand Central Station!" said I to the fellow dozing on his seat.

He came to with a start just as I was yanking open the door.

"Hold on a minute, mister," stammered the man, "I'm engaged."

I glanced at his "clock." Sure enough, his "vacant" sign was down. He was waiting for somebody.

"Bill, yonder, ain't got no fare," offered the driver, thumbing in the direction of the car beyond. "He'll carry ye."

And next minute I had given directions to "Bill," who cranked forthwith; and, speed having evidently showed in my attitude, we turned the corner almost on two wheels. But my ear caught the whir of the first car as it, in turn, was started.

I might have saved myself some anxiety had I stopped to think that, near midnight as it was, the streets were free from traffic. There is something in me that delights in speed, and that ride was a little slice of joy in itself. We reached the station in plenty of time for my train.

I broke the twenty-dollar bill I had so easily earned that afternoon, and secured my berth before boarding the Pullman.

Some impulse prompted me to turn my head just as I was passing through the gate entrance to trains; and the station, at this hour, was deserted enough for me to note the fact that another man stood before the Pullman ticket window, his back toward me. Once aboard the sleeping car, I slipped a quarter into the eagerly expectant palm of the dusky attendant, and said: "Make up number seven, George," and then passed up the aisle into the smoking room.

I had been on a steady and momentous jump since the minute I had clapped my eyes on the launch at a quarter to five. I must run over things a bit; and I reasoned that the two dark-hued panetelas that still remained unbroken in my upper vest pocket would help.

What I wondered at was my own attitude in the matter of this chase. Where did I stand? Here I was, without any data whatever as to what he was wanted for, virtually throwing myself into the chase of a man who had shown himself closely related in some way to a girl whom I had, in a most freakish and outlandish manner, fallen in love with. Why?

Honesty with myself soon told me that it wasn't alone professional duty that was whirling me toward Portland.

But what of Pawlinson? It must be big game, or he wouldn't be connected with it, let alone personally engaged in sleuth work.

Then, again, how was I going to figure with Pawlinson when he discovered that I, who now was engaged as his own hireling through Chief Garth, was the selfsame man who had just thwarted him by having him punched prettily over the side of a launch?

I was really not much to blame in this; for I had done the thing unwittingly enough; but such things aren't easily brooked. In spite of myself, though, I couldn't help chuckling at the memory of the incident.

I had never seen Pawlinson before; but I stood in as much awe as the rest of the cubs at his name; and it did me a bit of inward good to think of the merriment I could make in recounting the thing to them later.

I knew little of the history of the man; but the little I did know was out of the ordinary.

To begin with, nobody had ever heard that such a man

existed until a short three years before; but then he had suddenly sprung into the most dazzling limelight.

At that time the entire country had been bewildered and infuriated by a succession of daring safe-crackings. To make it worse, these jobs were, in nearly every instance, characterized by what appeared to be the most useless bloodshed. The perpetrators had seemed to go out of their way to use pistol and dirk.

Watchmen were found viciously stabbed; clerks, working late, had been murdered; and all these crimes had been committed in small communities and upon small dealers.

From chagrin, the public had quickly turned to indignation and storm; for the detective force had proved themselves absolutely powerless and inefficient.

Then had come Pawlinson.

He entered Washington headquarters one day, and quietly informed the chief there that he wanted to enter the detective service. Asked his credentials and former experience, he as quietly stated that by the end of that week he would bring in the entire gang that was puzzling them all.

And he did. Since which his place had been established, a place not a little enhanced by the very mysteriousness of him; a mysteriousness which I had heard he was at no pains to explain or eliminate.

"Well"—I concluded my soliloquy finally—"here I am mixed right up—and closely, too—with Pawlinson himself."

But my duty was clear enough. I had told the chief I would wire him when I had located the man; and so, not only my own word, but his, as my chief, was out.

"That much I can do, anyway," I grunted to myself, dropping the end of my second cigar into the cuspidor. "Beyond that we shall see what we shall see."

With that I quitted the smoking room and sought my berth. As I lurched at a rolling gait down the aisle toward my number, for we were hitting up a lively clip, I noticed that all the berths had been made up by this time.

Then I seemed to recall that, in my abstraction, I had been vaguely conscious of a stop some half hour before; and I now reasoned that it was Stamford, Connecticut, or thereabout.

In the aisle I stripped off coat, vest, collar, tie, and shirt; then, just before ducking under the heavy curtain for the berth, and for no real reason that I yet know, I happened to sweep my eye up and down the car from one end to the other. And I could vow to this day that I saw the curtains of both number nine and number three drawn vigorously in toward the respective berths.

But really, down deep, I am of a care-free nature, and I was asleep in three shakes.

TO BE CONTINUED.

CAUGHT IN THE COILS.

The following adventure which befell Speke, the great explorer, forms one of the most thrilling episodes in a life full of perils and escapes. Captain Speke himself tells the tale.

It appears that he, with his comrade Grant, left the camp together one day to hunt game for their supper. Their first victim was a fine young buffalo cow.

Soon after, they had a prospect of still better fortune. An enormous elephant with particularly fine tusks was observed within range. Speke quickly brought his rifle up to his shoulder, took a careful aim, and fired.

A moment after, as he was watching for the effect of his shot, he heard a startled exclamation from the attendant negroes, and looked round.

To his horror, he saw a huge boa constrictor in the very act of darting down upon him from a branch overhead.

In less than a second—indeed, before he had time to stir a muscle to spring aside—the beast had shot out of the heavy foliage and caught him in a coil. Speke put out all his strength to get clear, and at the same instant, glancing round for help, saw Grant standing a few paces away, with rifle leveled.

"In a moment," he continues, "I comprehended all. The huge serpent had struck the young buffalo cow, between which and him I had unluckily placed myself at the moment of firing upon the elephant. A most singular good fortune attended me, however, for, instead of being crushed into a mangled mass with the unfortunate cow, my left forearm had only been caught in between the buffalo's body and a single fold of the constrictor. The limb lay just in front of the shoulder, at the root of the neck, and thus had a short bed of flesh, into which it was jammed, as it were, by the immense pressure of the serpent's body, that was like iron in hardness.

"As I saw Grant about to shoot, a terror took possession of me; for if he refrained, I might possibly escape, after the boa released its folds from the dead cow; but should he fire and strike the reptile, it would, in its convulsions, crush or drag me to pieces.

"Even as the idea came to me, I beheld Grant pause. He appeared fully to comprehend all. He could see how I was situated, that I was still living, and that my delivery depended upon the will of the constrictor. We could see every one of each other's faces, so close were we, and I would have shouted or spoken or even whispered to him, had I dared. But the boa's head was reared within a few feet of mine, and a wink of an eyelid would perhaps settle my doom; so I stared, stared, stared, like a dead man at Grant and at the blacks.

"Presently the serpent began very gradually to relax his folds, and, after retightening them several times as the crushed buffalo quivered, he unwound one fold entirely. Then he paused.

"The next ironlike band was the one which held me a prisoner; and as I felt it, little by little, unclasping, my heart stood still with hope and fear. Perhaps, upon being free, the benumbed arm, uncontrolled by any will, might fall from the cushionlike bed in which it lay! And such a mishap might bring the spare fold around my neck or chest—and then farewell to the sources of the Nile!

"Oh, how hard, how desperately I struggled to command myself! I glanced at Grant, and saw him handling his rifle anxiously. I glanced at the negroes, and saw them still gazing, as though petrified with astonishment. I glanced at the serpent's loathsome head, and saw its bright, deadly eyes watching for the least sign of life in its prey.

"Now, then, the reptile loosened its fold on my arm a hair's-breadth, and now a little more, till half an inch of space separated my arm and its mottled skin. I could have whipped out my hand, but dared not take

the risk. Atoms of time dragged themselves into ages, and a minute seemed eternity itself.

"The second fold was removed entirely, and the next one easing. Should I dash away now, or wait a more favorable moment? I decided upon the former; and with lightning speed I bounded away toward Grant, the crack of whose piece I heard at the next instant.

"For the first time in my life I was thoroughly overcome; and, sinking down, I remained in a semiunconscious state for several minutes. When I fully recovered, Grant and the overjoyed negroes held me up, and pointed out the boa, which was still writhing in its death agonies. I shuddered as I looked upon the effects of its tremendous dying strength. For yards around where it lay, grass and bushes and saplings, and, in fact, everything except the more fully grown trees were cut quite off, as though they had been trimmed by an immense scythe.

"The monster, when measured, was fifty-one feet two and a half inches in extreme length, while round the thickest portion of its body the girth was nearly three feet, thus proving, I believe, to be the largest serpent that was ever authentically heard of."

POWERFUL BEGGARS.

The Chinese are more charitable than they have been given credit for. They give freely, especially on occasions of public or private rejoicing.

Beggars are numerous everywhere, and are organized into a sort of union or guild, with a master at the head, whose word is law to his mendicant subjects, and whose laws are as unchanging as those of the Medes and Persians. No man can be buried without a large share of "funeral baked meats" falling to the lot of the beggars' guild.

No person is allowed to marry by this powerful union unless he or his friends pay a tribute to the king of beggars, in the shape of a big feast and a sum of money.

The last varies from one to five hundred dollars, according to the means of the tribute payer. The feast must consist of as good food as is served to the wedding guests.

On this the beggar king and his cabinet dine, with as much gusto, if not as much ceremony, as the Emperor of China when feasting his ministers. In almost every city you will find a beggars' guild. The subjects of any one king vary in number, according to the size of the city. These kings of China's submerged millions, whose territories consist of streets, gutters, bridges, and doorsteps, and whose subjects have been won for him by poverty, accident, vice, and disease, exercise a patriarchal sway and dispense a rough and primitive justice. The office is not hereditary, but elective, and tenable for life.

The beggar king lives in a house that is almost a palace, compared to the miserable shelter that his subjects have to be contented with. Not infrequently he grows rich from the tribute paid him by the people of the upper crust of society. He has powerful means of enforcing his demands. He has means of annoyance which the police are unable to put a stop to.

Suppose a man about to marry refuses to recognize the claim of the beggar king. His wedding procession will be blocked by thousands of lame, halt, and leprous beggars, who will case their minds by imprecations such as are unfit for a bride to hear, and will be sure to bring ill luck on the married couple. Else this unseemly rabble will besiege the house of the unlucky bridegroom, and go through a similar performance. It is worth a large sum to be rid of such pests.

Even the magistrates, autocrats as they are in their own realms, respect the office of the beggar king, and never offend him if they can avoid it.

Ordinarily beggars go from house to house and from shop to shop with a bowl in hand, into which is poured the handful of rice, or is dropped the copper coin of charity. They are irrepressible, and will not take "no" for an answer.

QUEER THINGS TO EAT.

At the department of agriculture in Washington, hidden away in an obscuré corner, is an odd sort of exhibit of queer foods eaten by out-of-the-way people. There is a loaf of bread made from the roasted leaves of a plant allied to the century plant. Another kind of bread is from a dough of juniper berries. These are relished by some tribes of Indians, while others manufacture cakes out of different kinds of bulbs. The prairie Indians relish a dish of wild turnips, which civilized people would not be likely to enjoy at all. In the great American desert the "screw beans," which grow on mesquite bushes, are utilized for food. Soap berries furnish an agreeable diet for some savages in this country, while in California the copper-colored aborigines do not disdain the seeds of salt grass. Also in California the Digger Indians collect pine nuts, which are seeds of a certain species of pine—sometimes called "pinions"—by kindling fires against the trees, thus causing the nuts to fall out of the cones. At the same time a sweet gum exudes from the bark, serving the purpose of sugar. The seeds of gourds are consumed in the shape of mush by Indians in Arizona.

In addition to all these things, the exhibit referred to includes a jar of pulverized crickets, which are eaten in that form by the Indians of Oregon. They are roasted, as are likewise grasshoppers and even slugs. These delicacies are cooked in a pit, being arranged in alternate layers with hot stones. After being thus prepared, they are dried and ground to powder. They are mixed with pounded acorns or berries, the flour made in this way being kneaded into cakes and dried in the sun. The Assiniboines used a kind of seed to stop bleeding at the nose. Among other curious things used for food are acorns, sunflower seeds, grape seeds, flowers of cattails, moss from the spruce fir tree, and the blossoms of wild clover. The exhibit embraces a number of models representing grape seeds enormously enlarged. It is actually possible to tell the species of a grape by the shape of the seed. There is a jar of red willow bark which Indians mix with tobacco for the sake of economy. This, however, is only one of a thousand plants that are utilized in a similar fashion.

WHY HE WHISTLED.

Old Lady (to grocer's boy)—"Don't you know that it is very rude to whistle when dealing with a lady?"

Boy—"That's what the boss told me to do, ma'am."

"Told you to whistle?"

"Yes'm. He said if we ever sold you anything we'd have to whistle for our money."

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Honor for German Heroes.

The German kaiser has conferred on the pioneer company of a Lorraine battalion the right to wear the skull and crossbones on the cap, a distinction monopolized by the Death's Head Hussars. The action was taken at the instance of the crown prince, who reported the valor of the pioneers in building bridges and constructing earthworks under dangerous circumstances.

Austrians and Germans Foes.

Until recently the Austrians and German prisoners of war were kept together, but the Russian authorities had so much difficulty in preserving order among these nationalities that to prevent fights they have separated them in the hospitals. In Saratoff the Austrian wounded petitioned the authorities to separate them from the Prussians.

Mystery Man Fights for Estate.

"J. C. R.," the man of mystery, whose case has puzzled the country since he was found at Watseka, Minn., in June, 1907, has stepped from a comfortable home in Chicago into a tragic drama, the central figure in which is a wealthy rancher of near Dickinson, N. D., whom he claims as his father and from whom he is seeking to obtain $100,000 as his share of the estate.

No stranger story has ever been told than that of "J. C. R.," the man who couldn't remember. In 1900, it is now claimed, he was Jay Allen Caldwell, obstinate son of a former Chicagoan. Then he was struck on the head with a spade.

For a dozen years thereafter, without memory, without knowledge of his own identity, and without means of caring for himself, he wandered about, known only as J. C. R.

A few months ago a Chicago woman identified him as her missing son, Earl Iles, and J. C. R. gained a name and a home at the cost of his quondam fame. Bereft of his chief attributes of interest, the man and his little tragedy dropped from sight.

The suit which his lawyers filed early this week against A. J. B. Caldwell, whom he claims as his father, has been dismissed, but the lawyers say this was permitted in order to get more evidence, and it will be filed again within a few weeks.

Dispatches from Dickinson, the scene of the tangle, disclose the fact that seventy-five residents of the town, former neighbors of the Caldwells, identified J. C. R. as the missing son three months ago. Caldwell reiterates his charge that J. C. R. and his Chicago backers are conspirators, but Caldwell's daughter has identified the man of mystery as her brother.

Mrs. H. E. Pitkin, 895 East Oakwood Boulevard, Chicago, who identified J. C. R. last summer as her long-lost son, Earl Iles, has disappeared from her home.

And to complete the complexity of the enigma, J. C. R., the mute object of the whole identity tangle, is being kept in hiding by those who are backing his claims for $100,000 worth of North Dakota farm lands now held by the supposed father.

Friends of the elder Caldwell alleged that it was Mrs. Pitkin's early knowledge of Caldwell, junior, that gave her the information on which she satisfied the authorities with her identification of the man as her son. They charge that it was through this information that Mrs. Pitkin gained the custody of the man, which later resulted in the promotion of his fight for the $100,000.

It appears that for the last couple of months the mystery man has been in Dickinson. In the first part of that time he was busy asking questions of old residents—or, rather, writing them, for, along with his other afflictions, he is a mute.

The answers to the questions seemed to satisfy J. C. R. He filed suit against Caldwell. Simultaneously papers were filed making it impossible for Caldwell to transfer his lands in whole or in part.

Dickinson rubbed its eyes and sat up with a start when news of the suit filtered through town. The "dummy," who had been going up and down Main Street with his pencil, his paper, and his ever-increasing questions about old times, had come into the open and announced himself as no other than Jay Allen Caldwell, old man Caldwell's son.

No one who was willing to admit the fact knew what had happened to Jay. He had just disappeared one day. Not a word did he send home in all the ensuing months and years. His father, after waiting what seemed a decent time, produced notes aggregating $70,000. The notes were signed with the name of Jay Allen Caldwell and were drawn in favor of his father, who went into court, got judgment, and took his son's land in satisfaction.

Londoners Get "Zeppelin Neck."

"Zeppelin neck" is the form of malady now prevalent in London. This is the popular term for stiff necks, commoner than ever now because so many Londoners are craning their necks scanning the heavens for the enemy.

Westminster Abbey has been insured for $750,000 against damages from air-craft attacks.

Schoolboy Makes Record With Corn.

The largest per-acre yield of corn ever grown in Becker County, Minn., of which Detroit is the county seat, was raised during the season of 1914 by a thirteen-year-old schoolboy. Becker is one of the most northerly of Minnesota counties, and its farmers have always declared that it was useless to attempt corn-raising because of the cold climate and short seasons. But thirteen-year-old Hilmer Carlson, who lives on a farm three miles from Detroit, grew an acre of corn this year that yielded 96¼ bushels to the acre.

It was the first experiment for the Carlson boy in corn-raising. He was induced to enter by a prize offered by the Minnesota Society of Agriculture to the boy who should grow the most bushels of corn on an acre of ground. Without the experience of father and friends, who never had grown corn, the boy followed the instructions of the agricultural society, planted the Minnesota No. 13 variety, and grew a field of stalks that were twice

as high as his head. It husked 95 bushels rough measure. When the farmers of the community heard of the yield, they declared it could not be true; that some deception had been practiced. An expert of the State Agricultural College then came to the Carlson farm, measured both field and yield and found the exact yield to have been 96½ bushels per acre. State authorities declared the yield to have been by far the biggest per acre ever grown in the county. Ten Becker County boys went into the acre-yield corn contest. The boy who took second place grew 74 bushels to the acre.

Indicating the unpopularity of corn-growing in Becker County, the State board records show that of over 160,000 acres crop area in the county only 4,880 are given over to corn.

Veteran Fulfills Vow.

Sixty years ago, when, a lad ten years old, he fell from the limb of a giant tree and broke a leg, forcing him to spend his birthday in bed, Carl Grossmayer, of Evansville, Ind., vowed that on his seventieth birthday he would blow the tree from the ground. Grossmayer, now a veteran of the Second Regiment of Indiana Civil War Veterans, kept his vow by blowing from the ground the stump of the tree.

When he met with the accident, Grossmayer lived on a farm of 180 acres. Now that area has shrunk to a house and three lots. The elderly veteran's only relative, a son living in St. Louis, came to this city to see his father keep his sixty-year-old vow. A stump was all that remained of the oak, but Grossmayer drilled under it, and, with a charge of dynamite, blew it from the ground.

Placer Mining in Heart of City.

The gold-mining industry, both placer and quartz, in most instances has been for long so closely associated with the wilderness that the average man instantly conjures up pictures of ice-bound mountain passes, or glaring, sun-scorched stretches of desert, when he thinks of it. To such places his imagination turns where men daily and hourly must face hardship and danger in order to win the precious metal.

Yet in the city of Edmonton, Canada, since the outbreak of war, some thirty "grizzlies" have been at work on the banks of the Saskatchewan River. Here, within half a block of the city's main street, and always with the sound of its traffic in their ears, nearly a hundred men daily shovel and sluice for gold.

The bars of the Saskatchewan River in the early days and as late as 1900 were worked. Many prospectors at that time made from three to ten dollars a day. Of late years, however, mining of this kind has been abandoned, though a large dredge, working the bars of the river, has proven a paying proposition.

The river runs directly through the city. With the outbreak of war and the possibility of large numbers of men being out of employment, the city council suddenly turned their attention to gold mining, which offered returns right in the heart of the city. Within its gates are to-day a large number of old mining men. Men who, after going through the Klondike rush, settled here. Most of them are to-day wealthy and retired. But some half dozen of them offered their services as tutors.

A number of grizzlies, so commonly used in the working of river bars and other placer-mining propositions, were constructed and for a while they gave instructions as how to work them. About a hundred men soon went to work. Though the highest daily clean-up so far has been seven dollars, the majority of the workers are making from one to two dollars a day.

The workmen are from all classes of society. Old-time sourdoughs work next to new-come English immigrants. Two college students, working their way through a nearby university, put in their off hours shoveling and panning. An out-of-work literary man and an out-of-work actor here are working a claim together.

The mining game has always been marked for its tragic side. The stories of men made suddenly rich overnight by some fortunate strike has been told in a hundred stories; but seldom is the other side mentioned, the story of quick-flung-away wealth that went almost as rapidly as it came.

Working slowly, toilfully, with the mark of old age upon him, in this diggings within the heart of the city is at least one man who is a living representative of this sad side of the game. His name is Tim Foley. Ten years ago he sold his third interest in a quartz mine in northern Ontario for $40,000. To-day he toils strenuously on the river bank, his great hope, as he himself expressed it, to clean up three or four dollars a day.

Stage Lines Still in the West.

It has been many years since stage lines were the chief mode of transportation across Kansas, and had regular time-tables and rate schedules, as the railroads have at the present time. But there are still several stage lines in Kansas, and the railroads are publishing the schedules for these lines in their regular list of connections, as they do in the more Western States, where stage transportation is still common.

Along the Union Pacific and the Rock Island lines in northern Kansas, the Missouri Pacific through the center of the State and the Santa Fe in southern Kansas, there are still connecting stage lines which operate as regularly as the railroad trains. The building of the railroad from Garden City north to Scott City on the Missouri Pacific and then to Winona on the Union Pacific has caused several stage lines to go out of business. The building of the Colmor cut-off in southwest Kansas has caused the abandonment of several stage lines that reached the towns in the railroadless counties of the State.

There are two regular mail stage lines operated in Shawnee County, one connecting Dover with the Rock Island and another connecting Auburn with the Santa Fe. Both are only eight or nine miles long, but they carry mail and passengers to the railroads.

The Santa Fe "connecting-line" table shows stage lines connecting with its trains at Syracuse, Lakin, and Coolidge to points in the extreme southwest corner of the State not reached by rail. The Union Pacific has half a dozen stage lines listed in its tables in Kansas. These lines connect with the Missouri Pacific on the south or the Rock Island, or another branch of the Union Pacific on the north, touching several inland towns and saving traveling men long detours if they attempted to make the trip by rail. From Grainfield to Gove City there is a regular stage line, as Grainfield is on the railroad while Gove City, the county seat, is twelve miles away.

The stages have comparatively low fares and haul almost as much baggage free as does the railroad. The stage

trips in Kansas are no longer the picturesque outings of former days, as there are none of the old stagecoaches left with a six or eight-mule team and a driver with a long whip and a fine command of "mule-killing" language. All the stage lines in Kansas are motors now, one or two in the southwest part of the State having real motor trucks for baggage, express, and freight, and the trip is made almost as rapidly as the trains, unless a tire blows up.

Life-term Prisoner Gains Freedom.

When C. J. Livering, life-term prisoner, sent up on the charge that he poisoned his wife in Louisville, Ky., eight years ago, walked out of the Eddyville State's prison under parole, it was to enter his own manufacturing establishment, made possible by his own industry and inventive genius, as he invented a patent while in prison that may net him a fortune.

His parole followed the declaration of the judge who sentenced him of his belief in Livering's innocence. Honorable H. S. Barker, president of the State University, was the court-of-appeals judge at the time. In addition to the judge's opinion, Commonwealth Attorney Huffaker, of Louisville, says he believes that if a man who filed an affidavit had been called, he would have testified to hearing Mrs. Livering threaten to take her own life.

An effort was made at the trial to show that a woman was in love with and jealous of Livering and was responsible for the story that Livering had fixed up a suicide note in imitation of his wife's handwriting, had given his wife strychnine tablets as medicine and then went to his farm, hurrying back in time to place the suicide note and poison before calling any one to the scene.

Livering testified that he was on his farm, twenty-five miles away, when his wife phoned him to come home, and that he found her dead. A druggist testified that Mrs. Livering bought strychnine tablets. The suicide note was found on the dresser. The coroner's jury returned a verdict of suicide.

It was two years later when the woman's story resulted in Livering's conviction.

Machine Comes to Telegrapher's Aid.

Telegraph operators throughout the country are showing keen interest in a device perfected by Walter P. Phillips, of Bridgeport, Conn., for the purpose of rapidly handling commercial messages and press reports. Phillips is an old-time telegrapher and newspaper man and an inventor of wide fame. He was the originator of the "Phillips Code," used by newspapers. Operators from all parts of Connecticut gathered at Bridgeport to watch the demonstration of the new device.

It was shown that the invention will allow an operator receiving messages or news dispatches to regulate the incoming flow of telegraphy as fast or as slow as he may desire; to stop it altogether and go out to lunch, resuming business at increased speed upon his return, and catching up with the machine upon which the messages or news has been continually recording itself in impressions of dots and dashes on a tape awaiting reproduction. What the invention will do is to double or treble the number of words that can be sent over a single wire and do it without requiring that the operators learn anything more than they now know.

The result is brought about by adding to each office a set of very simple instruments. At times when there is no need of hurrying matter forward on the wires, the rapid system can be cut out through shifting a plug. The wires are then used in the ordinary way, sending messages directly by the key. As a result it is considered that the system is one of value principally to telegraph companies or those using leased wires. The general public, however, will benefit through the prompter sending of messages and doing away with the delay so often experienced when there are wire troubles and capacity is reduced below normal.

In the new system the messages or reports to be sent are recorded in raised telegraphic characters on a strip of paper. This paper is run through a reproducing machine, the sounds being repeated at the other end of the wire and being taken down by typewriter or hand. The sending operator is able to vary the speed to suit himself, is able to stop it at any point and pull it back, if there is need of repeating. The superiority of the invention over the old system is said to lie in the reading and sending. It is in this, telegraphers say, where the greater number of mistakes occur. The ear of a trained operator is found to be more accurate than the eye and also faster.

What a German Officer Saw.

From the diary of a German petty officer who is fighting in France, these extracts, as his own experience, are made:

"On all sides and in front, as well as below in the valley, the red breeches can be seen swarming in the underbrush. Thus both divisions of our tenth company find themselves facing apparently overwhelming superior forces. I myself make a run to where the captain should be. On the way a trumpeter transmits this order to me: 'Third column deploy and continue firing, or, if possible, attack!' I never ran so fast as I did then over those stubbles.

"'Third column, up! up! Fix bayonets! Right turn, forward, double-quick! Follow me!' I cried. Out comes the shining steel from its sheath. I catch a glimpse of an opening in a garden wall. 'This way, through! Occupy the hedge! Cut loopholes!'

"'What range?' the men call.

"'Range seven hundred! Half right, straight ahead in the poplars, hostile infantrymen! Range seven hundred! Fire!' was my reply.

"Just as we opened fire the enemy comes charging from out the poplars. Only a few steps they run, and then, as if thunder-stricken, the whole line of red breeches sinks to the earth. Our aim was good. How quiet the fallen Frenchmen lie! But soon the hellish racket begins again. In front of us a machine gun goes 'tap, tap, tap.' Whizzing and whirring, the bullets fly about us.

"Through an opening the men swarm through to the left! The bravest hurry on in advance. Five or six hang back till their leader roughly grabs them and kicks them through the hedge opening. There must have been 800 rifles or more! A withering fire tells us that the enemy has discovered our movements. But we return his fire as we run. Many of our men fall. But, lo! presently the enemy's fire begins to dwindle and soon dies down almost completely. There, what is that? In the midst of the enemy's line of fire a tremendous pillar of smoke.

We saw how the French were blown yards high. A terrible thunderclap reaches our ears. Hurrah! Our artillery!

"Shell after shell buries itself, as if measured with extraordinary exactitude in the very midst of the French infantry lines. We follow this up with our own fast rifle fire.

"Now we charge forward to where we can plainly see their faces. The panic of the enemy was indescribable. Our fellows mow them down. And now a new hail of shrapnel beats down upon them. Again the red breeches surge back in wild flight. We fire on the retreating enemy in a cornfield beyond. Many Frenchmen can be seen falling in the gold cornfield beyond, never to rise again."

Works Sixty Years on Propeller.

At the age of seventy-four years, James Henry Miller, of Albany, Ore., believes that the ambition of a lifetime is about to be realized. Sixty years ago, when he first saw a river boat with a stern propeller, Miller made up his mind to construct a propeller which would not strike the water with such resistance. He says that his invention, now virtually completed, will revolutionize river and ocean navigation throughout the world.

The propeller has eight blades, each six feet long and twelve inches wide, and each working on ratchets, so that the edge of the blade strikes the water as it enters, falls into propelling position while in deepest water, and continues to adjust itself as the wheel turns, so that it emerges from the water edge first. The flat side of the blade never strikes the water. As the wheel turns, the blades enter and leave the water with as little resistance as a feathered oar.

New Farming in South.

One Southern landowner has a plan for diversification of crops that might be followed by many others. He has divided his land into tracts that rent for $100 a year each. This is about equivalent to two bales of cotton under the old tenant system. But hereafter no cotton will be accepted as rent for these tracts. Instead, it will be required in food crops, according to this schedule:

50 bushels of corn	$50
15 bushels of wheat	15
3 bushels of peas	5
100 pounds of meat	15
15 bushels of potatoes	15
Total rent	$100

The landowner in question, realizing the novelty of his plan, proposes to coöperate with his tenants in getting selected seed. If the scheme is successful, it will merit a bulletin by the department of agriculture, to be widely distributed.

Florida Sharks That Nurse Their Young.

The curious piglike habits of the nurse sharks of Florida have been brought to the notice of the North Carolina Academy of Science by E. W. Gudger. A third of the circumference of Boca Grande Cay, a small coral sand island twenty miles west of Key West, is bounded by a gently sloping rock bottom, on which the water half a mile from the shore is not more than four or five feet deep.

On this bottom great numbers of the sharks gather in the sun, play, and possibly feed. With seldom less than a dozen visible, as many as thirty-three have been in view at one time.

They are broad, sluggish, so little afraid that a boat may touch their fins before they will move, and they lie piled together in a confused herd, like well-fed pigs in a barnyard. Sometimes three or four swim aimlessly about.

They are harmless, with small mouths filled with small pointed teeth, and, though they are vegetarians to some degree, their chief food seems to be the young oysters, clams, crabs, and various other crustaceans.

Ostrich Farming as a Business.

James H. Reece, of Joplin, Mo., who has been in California studying the "ins and outs" of the Pasadena ostrich farm, with a view of giving the business a try-out in this vicinity, has returned, and has considerable to say on the subject of the profitable raising of the big birds.

"Unless you have money to start with," said he, "you shouldn't attempt to go into ostrich farming in the United States for profit. Still, there are a number of ostrich farms in this country, and not all are failures. The first ostriches were brought here in 1862 from South Africa, and between that date and 1886, 120 birds were imported. We have now about 10,000 ostriches with us, nearly all of them American bred."

"And," he continued, "Arizona is the leading ostrich-farming section, though there are farms in California—the one at Pasadena being probably the best known of all of them—Texas, Arkansas, and Florida. Something like two millions of dollars is invested in the industry, not counting the value of the land. The business pays if the climate is all right and the birds receive proper care, for the ostrich, though tough, must be looked after carefully.

"An acre of alfalfa will support four ostriches with no other food than gravel and ground bone. A cow will require the same amount of alfalfa, but at the end of five years she is worth forty or fifty dollars, while the four five-year-old ostriches are worth a thousand dollars. A bird will yield a hundred dollars' worth of feathers a year, besides the eggs, which, even if they are not productive of little ostriches, bring a good price as curios.

"Ostrich plumes vary in price, from ten to one hundred and fifty dollars a pound, so you see it is worth money to the ostrich farmer, not only to have good birds, but to keep them in the best condition, for the better the bird the better the product.

"It costs about ten dollars a year to keep a bird; that is, to feed it. The ostrich farm at Pasadena is one of the show places there, and thousands of tourists visit it every year. Another good feature of the ostrich is that he lasts so long. None in this country has died of old age yet, and it is supposed that they will live seventy-five years."

French Story of Bravery.

A French battalion occupied Mezieres in order to guard the bridges over the Meuse River. One detachment had hardly arrived at the railroad bridge when its officer, Lieutenant de Lupel, was informed that a German patrol was hidden in the station. The French at once attacked and drove the Germans here and there among the heaps

of coal and the buildings. The French officer followed the German officer into the roundhouse, revolver in hand, and caught sight of him crouching behind a tender. The two men looked at each other. Mutual respect and a tacit understanding sprang up. With fifteen paces between them, each took up a dueling position. "Kindly fire," cried the Frenchman, just as his ancestors had cried at Fontenoy under similar circumstances. The German fired and missed. Then the Frenchman slowly raised his arm and fired, killing his opponent.

He returned to his men, aided them to overcome the Germans' last stand, and walked away coolly at the head of his battalion.

Nail Snaps from Box to Eye.

Joseph R. Henderson, proprietor of an Egg Harbor, N. J., poultry plant, was opening a box when a nail snapped from the box and entered the eyeball. He was taken to the Atlantic City Hospital. At this time it is not known whether he will lose the sight of the eye.

Woman's Throw Hits Mark.

Mrs. Dervin Shumaker, of Jackson township, Pa., noticed a large hawk feasting on her chickens. Picking up a stone, the woman threw it at the intruder. The stone struck the hawk on the head, killing the bird. She took the hawk to a justice of the peace and received forty cents bounty.

Man and Dogs Fight Rattler.

The biggest snake ever encountered near Watonga, Okla., was killed by Jeff Saunders seven miles north of that town. Mr. Saunders was hunting coyotes in the cañons when his dogs ran on to the snake, and started the fight which lasted an hour. After the battle, in which one dog was killed, the snake was hacked to pieces. Mr. Saunders gathered up the rattles which had been torn off. There were thirty-six of them.

The snake showed a disposition to ignore the dogs and fight Mr. Saunders, and several times he barely escaped being bitten. Mr. Saunders brought one piece of the snake home with him which measured 6 feet 9 inches in length, and there were several smaller pieces left on the battle ground.

Honoring the Hero of Peace.

Sixty-nine acts of heroism have just been given recognition by the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, at its annual meeting, through the distribution of medals and pensions. The commission has awarded silver medals in fifteen cases and bronze medals in fifty-four cases. Thirteen of the heroes lost their lives.

Among the number receiving silver medals is Miss Phoebe Briggs, of Sacramento, Cal., a student at Vasaar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y. Miss Briggs saved four girls from drowning. She was walking across the campus at the college when a toboggan carrying five of her fellow students coasted onto the ice on Vassar Lake and broke through. One of the girls came up under the ice and was drowned, but the others grasped the edge of the ice. Miss Briggs crawled toward the hole, pushing a small sled ahead of her. Two of the girls in turn grasped the sled and were pulled to safety. Miss Briggs went toward the hole a third time, but the ice broke and she fell into water nine feet deep. She pushed the sled down, and it remained in a perpendicular position, resting on the bottom. She then got her feet on the sled and supported the other girls several minutes until a man took them all to safety.

A silver medal has been awarded to the father of Henry West, a negro, of Chapel Hill, N. C. West, aged thirty-four, a crossing watchman, died saving Judson A. Haviland, aged nine, and Charles W. Jones, aged eleven, from being run over by a train at Asbury Park, N. J. The boys were driving a pony toward a track on which a passenger train was approaching. West, who had only one arm, waved a warning to them and then ran across the track and grabbed the harness beneath the pony's head. The pony turned aside and West lost his hold, falling. A step of the engine struck him, causing injuries from which he died. Neither of the boys was injured.

A bronze medal has been given to the father of Henry L. Wyman, of Moorestown, N. J. Wyman, aged twenty-four, a painter, died attempting to save G. Allen Seltzer, aged twenty-five, from drowning in Rancocas Creek, at Boughter, N. J. Wyman waded and swam thirty-five feet to the distressed man and caught him under the armpits. Wyman kept Seltzer's head above water for a time, but both men sank and were drowned.

To the dependents of three heroes the commission granted pensions aggregating $1,980 a year and the dependents of seven others who lost their lives were granted sums totaling $4,700, to be applied in various ways. Besides the money grants, in twelve cases sums aggregating $21,000 were appropriated for educational purposes, payments to be made as needed and approved. In forty-one cases awards aggregating $47,000 were made, to be applied toward the purchase of homes and to other worthy purposes.

Big Turtle Attacks Southern Fisherman.

Henry Simmons, of New Orleans, went fishing in Bayou Bienvenue, Miss., and had the unusual experience of being attacked by and afterward killing, in terrific battle, a large water turtle. He was fishing from a pirogue in ten feet of water, and the monster, a hundred-pounder, caught his line.

It came to the surface, and bit at the boat, tearing away a large piece of the prow. It continued to bite at the small craft until it almost turned over.

Simmons then reached for his shotgun and shot the monster's head off. He carried it to New Orleans, where, with the bitten boat, it is now on exhibition.

Just before he shot it, the turtle had raised a heavy paw to strike him. The experience of having such a vicious monster suddenly rise to the surface and peer into one's eyes with such evident determination to fight to the death, is an awful one, says Simmons.

Can a Pup Inherit a Kink in His Tail?

Deciding that a pup could inherit a kink in its tail from a similar peculiarity attached to its father, no matter if the wagger did happen to receive its twist through an accident after the "dad" had reached his majority, District Court Judge Frank Smathers, after most careful consideration of the unique problem, awarded Elmer D. Sooy, of Atlantic City, N. J., a rabbit-hound pup, to which both Sooy and Thomas Hudson, of Pleasantville, claim ownership.

During the hearing of the case, Sooy trotted in a puta-

tive papa hound, which had an odd curl in its wagger. Under cross-examination he testified that the peculiar kink was there because a third-rail trolley had run over it. The pup happened to have a similar Marcel to its tail.

Hudson, on the other hand, led in another supposed pop hound, which had blotches on its flanks identical to those that marked the pup, and said it was this dog's offspring.

It was too much for the court to decide in one sitting, but the next day, after his honor had spent his evening at home, pondering over canine spots and tails, Sooy got the pup.

The animal is worth fifty dollars, but the two men have spent more than three times that amount in their dispute over it, and Hudson says he will appeal and spend as much more, if necessary, to win.

Gypsies Travel in Auto.

Nomads of the old days would probably have refused to believe their eyes if they had seen a gypsy caravan which has just arrived at Worcester, Mass., from Denver, Col. Instead of traveling in the familiar wagons, drawn by worn horses, the tribe mounted the wagon tops on big automobile trucks. On the top, sides, and rear of the two wagons were the tents, pots, and others things inseparable to gypsy camps, and the dogs followed as best they could. Needless to say, the journey was made in record time.

Mother's Appeal Granted.

Mrs. Mathilda Zoll, of Washington, D. C., is happy in the thought that when she dies, her final resting place will be beside the body of her son in a soldier grave in Arlington National Cemetery. Her earnest plea that permission to this effect be given was granted by Secretary Garrison, although it is a rule that only the widows of army men may be buried in Arlington. Mrs. Zoll's son died a few weeks ago and was laid at rest in the national cemetery.

When Mrs. Zoll first made her request, it was refused, but her friends told Secretary Garrison she did not ask that her name be placed on the headstone, but would be satisfied to have her body cremated and the ashes placed in an urn in her son's grave. The secretary then issued the necessary orders.

Devil Worm Has Eight Horns.

Mrs. J. B. Lamb brought to the *Leader* office, at Fulton, Ky., a formidable-looking worm which she captured on a tree in the back yard of her home on Carr Street. This monster worm is nearly six inches in length and longer when in motion. It has eight horns on its head, curving backward, and is a scary-looking object. It is more than one and one-half inches in circumference, and is green in color. A little boy called it a "devil worm," and, for the lack of a better name, we will let it go at that.

Rancher Bags Bird Maimed in June.

While mowing hay last June, Abe Bruger, a Cathcart, Wash., rancher, surprised a mother pheasant and her brood in the tall grass. One of the flock was overtaken by the mower, which amputated both of its legs. It escaped to an alder thicket.

While hunting recently, Bruger winged a pheasant. When he recovered the bird, both of its legs were missing, a fact which recalled the accident of the early summer. The bird had become full grown, was in perfect condition, plump, and, in fact, larger than the average of this year's birds taken in the locality.

The wounds had completely healed, and, nature, in the process of healing, had developed a substitute for claws in the form of hard scales at the extremities.

Off Year for Peace Prizes.

A report from Christiania says that the managers of the Nobel Institute have decided to give this year's peace prize, which amounts to about $40,000, to the Netherlands government, to be applied toward the support of Belgian refugees in Holland.

Stallings a Brick Mason.

The Waycross, Ga., *Herald* is authority for the statement that George Stallings, the "Miracle Man" of baseball, used to be a brick mason, and a mighty good one, at Thomasville. Hence, it is not so hard to understand his remarkable ability to "build up" a team.

Missourian's Strange Pet.

There are many strange pets in the world, but the one belonging to John Barnes, of Maysville, Mo., is perhaps as strange as any. It is a giant blue racer, five feet long, and as large in the middle as an average man's arm. Mr. Barnes keeps the snake for the purpose of freeing the place of mice and other pests. It never molests any one and seems perfectly tame.

War Correspondents' Troubles.

Who wants to be a war correspondent? Two American correspondents arrived at Rouen, France. They had been shifted around the country for days. They had hay in their hair and sleep in their eyes, and they hadn't eaten for years, it seemed to them. Every hotel and boarding house and joint in Rouen was filled to overflowing. They found their way to headquarters and placed their journalistic cards on the table.

"Thank goodness, we're here at last!" they said. "Tell us——"

But the major wouldn't tell them. He wouldn't even listen to them.

"For your impertinence in coming here," he said severely, "you shall sleep in jail to-night."

The correspondents smiled happily and shook hands with each other.

"It began to look as though we'd sleep under a bridge," they said to the major. So he found out about their plight.

"That being the case," said he sternly, "you shall not sleep in jail to-night. You shall take the train for the coast. There are no places left in the train, but that makes no difference. You shall take it, just the same."

When they got back to London they went to a Turkish bath and slept for twenty hours before reporting at the office.

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